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# Broadway Translations

*"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale  
Her infinite variety"*



TO  
A. D.

Felices ter et amplius  
quos irrupta tenet copula nec malis  
divulsus querimonius  
suprema citius solvet amor die.



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# THE MIRROR OF VENUS

## INTRODUCTION

### LOVE IN LATIN LITERATURE

#### I

TO trace the record of the most universal of human emotions, in a literature as extensive as that of Rome, would seem to be a task involving a considerable amount of labour. If we take the year 450 B.C. as an approximate date for the 'Twelve Tables,' and agree that Erasmus is the last important writer who uses Latin as a vehicle for pure literature, we have a period of some twenty centuries and a volume of written work that would tax the resources of the largest library to hold its contents. In the case of many departments of human activity—agriculture, for example, politics, warfare, legal procedure—a large book would be required even for a brief summary of the subject. But it is not so with love; and even a casual survey of our material will reveal at once three facts which, taken together, render

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a short survey considerably less difficult than would at first appear.

To begin with, almost all Latin writers who deal with love do so in verse. Petronius and Apuleius certainly describe some manifestations of the passion in their prose, but, speaking generally, love is essentially reserved in Latin literature as a theme for poetical treatment. The romantic prose novel, with love as its chief topic of interest, was invented by the Greeks during the first two centuries of the Roman Empire; but we have no Latin novelist at all corresponding to Heliodorus, Longus, or Chariton. Indeed, the romantic prose novel and the romantic prose play, which in modern times have become the favourite forms of literary expression, in Latin can scarcely be said to exist.

In the second place, even in Latin poetry, love only emerges as the predominant motif during a comparatively short period, the golden age from Catullus to Ovid, a period bounded by the space of one man's lifetime, when the influence of Alexandria on Roman literature was at its strongest. The plays of Plautus and Terence have frequently a pair of lovers among the stock characters whom they inherited from the New Comedy of Menander and Philemon; but it is the broad humour of the one and the worldly wisdom of the other dramatist, not their mechanical love

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intrigue, that gives them their permanent value. As for the writers of the Empire—Lucan, Statius, Juvenal and the rest—they are all of them rather rhetoricians than poets, and the tricks of their trade had got so firm a hold upon them that a simple treatment of a simple emotion was for them an impossibility. There are a few isolated pieces, like the ‘*Pervigilium Veneris*,’ that herald the flowering of romance, but most of the imperial poetry is in all matters of sentiment an arid waste.

Thirdly—and this is perhaps the most striking point of the three—the Roman and the English conceptions of love move on quite different planes of thought. The influence of Christianity, which turned the Roman vices of *humilitas* and *patientia* into the Christian virtues of humility and patience, has something to do with the change: a second factor is the different view of the relations between the sexes brought about by the mediæval schools of chivalry: a third is the coldness of temperament natural to a northern people, which diverts love into channels of sentiment and hides the grosser elements of passion behind a decent veil. It is unnecessary now to discuss whether these three are the only, or even the chief, reasons: the fact remains that an alteration of outlook has been made; so that at this point, before we proceed further, it may be useful to consider what exactly the word

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‘*amor*’ means in Latin, and what exactly the word ‘*love*’ means in English.

### II

In our Oxford English Dictionary there are six principal meanings attached to the word love. The first, and therefore presumably the most important of these definitions, runs as follows : “That disposition or state of feeling with regard to a person which (arising from recognition of attractive qualities, from instincts of natural relationship, or from sympathy) manifests itself in solicitude for the welfare of the object, and usually also in delight in his presence and desire for his approval ; warm affection, attachment.” The gender of the pronouns is significant, ‘delight in *his* presence and desire for *his* approval’ ; but to a Roman the most remarkable feature of the long sentence would be the total absence of any reference to physical feeling. Friendship, we know, is akin to love, and Catullus in his calmer moments can pray Lesbia for ‘*aeternum sanctae foedus amicitiae*,’ ‘a sacred compact of eternal affection’ ; but the two things are not really the same, and if we translated our English into Latin, it would be a description of ‘*amicitia*’

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or of ‘*caritas*’, it would not be a description of ‘*amor*’.

The second definition in the Dictionary is even further removed from Roman ideas:—“In religious use, applied in an eminent sense to the paternal benevolence and affection of God towards his children, to the affectionate devotion due to God from his creatures, and to the affection of one created being to another so far as it is prompted by the sense of their common relationship to God.” In speaking of such ethereal love as this, the word ‘*amor*’ in Latin would be quite out of place, and is indeed consistently avoided by the Vulgate which uses ‘*dilectio*’ and the verb ‘*diligo*’ in preference. In classical Latin, the idea is expressed by ‘*pictas*’, that sense of obligation whereby gods protect men and men worship gods, parents nurture children and children reverence parents, citizens serve states and states guard citizens. *Pietas* and *Amor*, so far from being equivalents are often opposites, and on such a conflict the main plot of the *Aeneid* is based. Aeneas, being a Roman hero, is bound eventually to prefer duty to passion, and it is rather curious, considering our high standards of morality, that to English readers his choice seems to stamp him definitely as unheroic.

The next definition is shorter:—“Strong predilection, liking or fondness *for* or devotion

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*to* something.” This, of course, although our Dictionary does not expressly say so, is not a real, but only a metaphorical use of the word. When a child says :—‘ I *love* chocolates’ we recognize a natural exaggeration of speech, and such a phrase as ‘ love of learning ’ is but a similar example of transference. In Latin, as we might expect, ‘ *amor* ’ is occasionally used in this sense ; but the normal word, especially when the object of desire is an action, is ‘ *studium* ’, and when ‘ *amor* ’ takes its place there is usually a conscious straining after emphasis. In any case, however, it is a metaphor, and for our present purpose, therefore, this, the third definition, may be disregarded.

Of these first three definitions of love, then, none brings us very close to what the Romans meant by ‘ *amor* ’. The fourth at last comes nearer :—“ That feeling of attachment which is based upon difference of sex : the affection which subsists between lover and sweetheart and is the normal basis of marriage.” A Roman would at least have understood the meaning of this in relation to ‘ *amor* ’, and would probably have accepted the first two clauses as fairly satisfactory, although he might have thought them unnecessarily vague. But he would scarcely have agreed with the last six words. ‘ *Amor est conubii fundamentum* ’ would have seemed to him a paradox and a slightly immoral paradox at that. It is one of

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our romantic beliefs that marriages are made in heaven, and that if the sexes mingle freely together a mystic affinity will bring together the predestined pairs. The Romans were more sceptical and more suspicious of human nature, and intercourse between young men and marriageable girls was hedged about with restrictions. A marriage with them was a matter of formal arrangement. the preliminaries being in the hands of the parents on either side, and by a carefully drawn contract, signed, sealed and witnessed, the material interests of both parties were as far as possible secured. Its basis, in fact, was not '*amor*', but '*fides*', that sense of moral integrity and commercial rectitude which forbids an honest man or woman to break an agreement, so long as the other party abides by its stipulations. In this conception of marriage there is no room for sentiment or sensuality, no opportunity for chivalry or romance : it is a pure matter of business and it will be a success or a failure according to the ease or difficulty with which the two partners work together. But it has its advantages, and, on the whole, the stricter forms prevalent in early Italy worked well, so that women at Rome were never reduced to such a position of social inferiority as they were at Athens. It is true that the respect which a woman enjoyed was perhaps given to her rather as a child-bearer than as a wife. Certainly, '*matrimonium*'

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means, ‘the making a woman a mother,’ and the most honourable title that could be given her was not ‘*uxor*’ or ‘*conjunx*’ but ‘*matrona*’ or ‘*materfamilias*’. If, however, she was a mother her position was unassailable; in the household she took a place only second to her husband, and over her children she exercised a very real control. Yet all this had little to do with the softer emotion of love, and the feeling which Horace’s Sabine matron inspired in her husband would be more correctly described by the word ‘*reverentia*’ than by the word ‘*amor*’.

But it would be very foolish to deny the existence at Rome of many happy unions. Married love was far more possible and far more common in Italy than it had been in Greece, and the close community of material interests, which was brought about by the marriage contract, undoubtedly led in many cases to a union of hearts as well as of purses. With the records of married life, however, literature is not usually concerned. A happy marriage, like a happy nation, has no history. It is one of the most wonderful of nature’s miracles, the slow blending of two creatures into one; but it is a long process devoid of incident, and lends itself with difficulty to literary treatment. In actual life there is no monotony in happiness, and a husband and wife who remain lovers find life one long romantic adventure. But in literature, by its very nature,

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there is always a mixture of the unreal, so that even our novelists by a wise instinct commonly lead their heroes and heroines to the altar—and there leave them.

Still, we have a sufficiently large number of references to happy marriages, both in Latin poetry and in Latin prose, to prove, if proof were necessary, that there were in ancient Rome abundance both of loving wives and of constant husbands. Ovid, whose third marriage at least was successful, in the *Metamorphoses* tells of three such fortunate couples, Procris and Cephalus, Cœyx and Alcyone, Philemon and Baucis; and in relating their histories he makes it plain that such lifelong devotion as theirs was in his own time no uncommon thing. We must grant that the two Roman husbands of whose private life we know most, Marcus Tullius Cicero and his brother Quintus, can neither of them be exactly described as model spouses; but as an offset in literature to the marital misfortunes of Terentia and Pomponia we may fairly take the signal felicity of Turia's life with her husband Lucretius Vespillo. The so-called '*Laudatio Turiae*', a long inscription on a marble slab, the very slab probably that once adorned her tomb, may now be read in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Vol. VI, No. 1527). It is unfortunately mutilated, but Mommsen's conjectural reconstruction of the missing portions gives a connected and

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intelligible narrative, and it is so valuable a document of conjugal affection, lasting for forty-one years of married life, that a summary of its contents may not be out of place here. Although it is in the form of a panegyric, such as was often actually delivered at a funeral, it has a reality of emotion that is usually lacking in such ceremonial utterances, and it derives additional pathos from the fact that the husband throughout addresses his dead companion as though she were still at his side.

"Before our marriage," so the mutilated stone begins, "you suddenly lost both your parents, who were murdered in their lonely country-house. I was in Macedonia at the time, your sister's husband Cluvius in Africa; but owing to your efforts their death was not left unavenged. With such energy did you perform your filial task of tracking down the assassins that if I had been there myself I could not have done more." Then follows an eulogy of his wife's firmness in insisting, under her father's will, that her inheritance should pass under the joint control of her husband and herself, and an account of the success of the arrangement. "But of this," he says, "I leave much unsaid, lest I should seem to be claiming a share in the praise that is due to you alone," and then resumes:—"Such a marriage as ours is rare indeed, one ended by death not broken by divorce; for forty-one

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years we have lived in perfect harmony. Would that our long union had reached its last phase by my death, for I was your elder and should more properly have paid my debt to fate ! Why should I enumerate now your domestic virtues, your chastity, obedience, kindness, courtesy ; how assiduous you were at your spinning and weaving, how truly religious and yet, how averse to all foreign superstitions ! You did not dress conspicuously, your manner of life was modest, you performed all your duties to the household most sedulously, and you tended my mother with the same care as you gave your own parents. Innumerable other excellences you had in common with all other honest matrons, but these I have mentioned were peculiarly your own : the fortune of mortals has seen to it that such qualities as yours should be rare." He then relates his wife's bravery at the time of the proscriptions, when his life was in imminent danger, before coming to the last period of their marriage in the peaceful days that followed the battle of Actium, 31 B.C. Their happiness then was only marred by one thing, the absence of children, and he says :—" If fortune in this matter had been kinder, what would have been lacking to either of us ? How you attempted to repair our misfortune would seem in other women a thing beyond belief, but in your case it was only in accordance with your other

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virtues. Thinking that you were not likely to have children now, and distressed by my childless state, you proposed a divorce, so that I should not, by keeping you as wife, forfeit all hope of descendants. You said that you would gladly surrender your place to another woman who might bear me offspring: you yourself would arrange the marriage for me and would love any children that might be born as though they were your own: nor would you take anything of your own property from the common stock, but would leave everything under my control. I must confess that I was so filled with horror and burning anger at your proposal that I almost went out of my mind. To think that you should propose a divorce before death came to separate us, and conceive the possibility of ceasing in your lifetime to be my wife! What need, what desire had I for children that I should be disloyal to you, and exchange a certainty for a risk? But enough of that. You remained with me; I could not yield to your proposal without shame to myself and unhappiness for us both: it is your glory that you were willing by your unselfish aid to give me the children that you could not bear." And then after some further laments for her premature death he concludes:—"My natural grief deprives me now of all strength and vigour. I am overwhelmed by anguish, distracted by sorrow and weariness.

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When I remember our past, and think of what awaits me in the future I fall into utter despair. I have lost my best protector : I brood over the glory that has passed away with you : I seem to have been only spared by fate for misery and regret. You have deserved all the praise—and indeed far more—than any words of mine can give. I can but pray that in the world beneath your shade will grant you peace and calm repose ! ”

Such in outline is the ‘Laudatio Turiae’, and as a worthy pendant to it we may take the last, and in some ways the noblest of Propertius’ elegies, the poem where he makes the dead Cornelia, daughter of Cornelius Scipio, address her husband Lucius Aemilius Paullus from the tomb:—

“ *Cease, Paullus, cease to vex my tomb with tears ;  
Dark is the door, nor thy entreaties hears.*  
*When once the corpse has entered death's  
domain*  
*The roads firm closed with adamant remain,*  
*And though thou beg the lord of this grey hall*  
. *On the deaf shore thy tears unheeded fall.*  
*Vows move the gods : when Charon has his fee,*  
*The wan gate shuts the grassy pyre for thee.*  
*Such was the meaning of the trumpet's note,*  
*When from the bier my head the burning smote.*  
*What use our marriage, my ancestral car ?*  
*Vain all the pledges of my glory are.*  
*Not e'en Cornelia the Fates would spare ;*  
*One hand may lift all that is of me there.*

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*Darkness of doom and thou slow marshy tide,  
That clogs my feet and bars on every side,  
All guiltless was I, though too soon I came,  
And from the Father mercy now I claim.  
Let Aeacus ascend the judgment seat,  
With urn and lots to give the verdict meet,  
And let his brothers there on either hand  
In the stern court array the Furies' band.  
Sisyphus, be still ; Ixion, thy circle stay ;  
Assuage thy thirst, O Tantalus, to-day.  
Leave the poor shades, fierce Cerberus, in peace,  
And let the chains their endless clamour cease.  
I for myself will plead, and if I lie  
The Danaids' urn shall be my penalty.*

*If any wife may boast ancestral fame,  
The Afric realm knows our Numantine name ;  
From Libo's stock my mother's lineage,  
Both houses writ in history's golden page.  
When bordered robe gives place to marriage  
fires  
And maiden's locks a woman's coif attires,  
Then, Paullus, to thy bed in nuptial state  
I came, too soon to leave my only mate.  
I call upon my grandsires' glorious dust,  
Beneath whose statues Africa lies crushed,  
And Perseus whom Achilles' anger woke,  
And thou who once Achilles' kingdoms broke,  
Ne'er did I slight the censor's stern behest,  
Nor make our hearth to blush by sin confessed.*

## *LOVE IN LATIN LITERATURE*

*No loss from me did those high trophies get ;  
In our great house I too a pattern set.  
Blameless my life, in youth and age unstained ;  
From torch to torch my honour proud remained.  
The laws that nature gave were in my blood,  
I needed not a judge to make me good.  
Stern though the verdict be when I am tried,  
None will be shamed by sitting at my side.  
Not Claudia, Cybele's priest serene,  
Who drew the rope and moved the crowned queen,  
Nor she whose linen showed a living flame  
When Vesta for the fire entrusted came.  
Dear mother mine, no harm I did to thee  
What wouldest thou wish, save fortune, changed  
in me ?*

*My mother's tears, the city's sad laments,  
And Cæsar's grief—here is my sure defence.  
For loud he cried, with tears in eyes divine,  
—‘Worthy she was to be a child of mine’.  
I earned the robe by honoured matrons worn :  
It was no childless home whence I was born.  
My boys yet live, my solace here beneath,  
Paullus and Lepidus closed my eyes in death.  
Twice did my brother curule office gain,  
His consul's year o'er-clouded by death's pain.  
My girl her father's censorship shall prove,  
Still, like her mother, constant to one love.  
Build up our house : I do not fear to die,  
While you remain to swell my destiny.  
This is the last reward, our triumph won,  
When on the tomb the record writes—‘Well done’.*

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*And now our children to thee I bequeath,  
Fond thoughts that still within my ashes breathe;  
Father and mother to them art thou now,  
And round thy neck alone their arms they  
throw.*

*So when they come in sorrow to thy knee,  
The house thy burden, add one kiss for me.  
Let them not see thee in thy love's distress,  
But with dry cheeks deceive their fond caress.  
Thine are the hours of darkness; thine the  
pain  
Of sleep where visions bring my face again,  
And oft expectant for my word's reply  
Soft wilt thou speak to her thou dreamest nigh.*

*Perchance the hall shall see another bed,  
And to my couch a second wife be led.  
But be not vexed, dear children: praise the  
bride;  
Soon by your love will she be pacified.  
Nor praise too much your mother nor compare:  
Words over-free a look of malice bear.  
But if still constant to the dead he stay,  
And think my ashes worth that price to pay.  
Learn even now to tend his coming age  
And let your care his widowed grief assuage.  
The years I lost may they to you be lent,  
And in my children Paullus find content.  
'Tis well: I never mourned a baby dear:  
All your fair company arrayed my bier.*

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*My speech is done. Ye witnesses, arise ;  
While grateful earth repays my sacrifice.  
To virtue heaven opens : may I win  
A voyage o'er those waves to peace within ! ”*  
*Propertius, IV, xi.*

It may perhaps be thought that both these documents prove respect rather than love, and that we might expect to find in Latin literature some traces of warmer feeling than they show between husband and wife. But it must be remembered that of the seven poets who supply us with the greater part of our material Ovid is the only one of whom we can say for certain that he was married. The other six, with the doubtful exception of Propertius, were all bachelors, so that it is not surprising that references to the joys of conjugal love are in their writings somewhat rare. Catullus certainly shows a perception of its possibility in the nuptial ode which he wrote to celebrate the bridals of his friends Manlius and Junia, but neither Lucretius nor Horace nor Tibullus ever enlarge upon the blessings of the married state. Virgil has the episode of Orpheus and Eurydice, but that is more than counterbalanced by the episode of Aeneas and Creusa, and while the pious hero loves Dido he marries Lavinia. Indeed, of them all it will not be unfair to say that, poets though they be, in this respect they are true Romans and fail to

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see any vital connexion between marriage and love.

### III

While our Dictionary's fourth definition of love has some application to Roman life, it is more in accordance with English than with Latin ideas. The fifth is based neither on English nor on Latin, but rather upon Greek modes of thought.—“Love—with a capital letter—the personification of sexual affection; usually masculine, and more or less identified with the Eros Amor or Cupid of classic mythology; formerly sometimes feminine, and capable of being identified with Venus. In plural, the multitude of nameless gods of love imagined by mythologists.” Certainly Amor is in Latin the equivalent of the Greek Eros, Venus of the Greek Aphrodite, the Cupidines of the swarm of little winged children who attend upon the Cyprian goddess. But all this is borrowed by the Roman poets directly from the Alexandrian Greeks, and such a piece as Propertius’ “*quicunque ille fuit puerum qui pinxit Amorem*” is little more than a pastiche of Meleager and Asclepiades:— .

“ *Think'ſt not that he had hands of cunning rare  
Whoe'er first painted Love a little boy?*  
*He saw what heedless beings lovers are,  
Losing life's blessings for a trivial toy.*

## *LOVE IN LATIN LITERATURE*

*Nor yet in vain those airy wings he gave  
And bade him flutter in the human breast :  
Truly we toss upon a restless wave  
And are by ever-changing breezes pressed.*

*Nor bears the Boy those barbed shafts for show,  
And Cretan quiver from his shoulders slung ;  
Dreamless of danger, ere we see the foe  
He strikes and leaves his victim torment-wrung.*

*In me his shafts, in me his image lies  
But, sure, his wings of gossamer are gone ;  
For ne'er, alas ! he from my bosom flies,  
But in my blood keeps ever warring on."*

*Propertius, II, xii.  
(Cranstoun's translation.)*

In imitation of the Alexandrians also are the many Latin poems which transfer to youths the emotions normally inspired in men by the opposite sex, such pieces as those which Catullus writes on Juventius, Virgil on Alexis, Horace on Gyges and Nearchus. How far these are mere literary exercises, and how far they express a true feeling, it is impossible now to determine, although in many cases it must be acknowledged that their form is of impeccable beauty. One of the most charming poems in Latin, for example, is that in which Propertius half-humorously warns Gallus to beware lest his

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young friend Hylas should suffer the fate of his mythological namesake :—

“ *This warning, Gallus, for thy love I send,  
Nor let it from thy heart unheeded fall.  
Thou hast a Hylas too, thy fairest friend,  
Whom many a wanton nymph would fain  
enthral*  
*By Anio’s stream, or in the forests tall,  
Or at the Giant’s Causeway cast her spell,  
Or on some wandering river. Shun them all,  
Remembering what the Minyaē befell,*  
*And listen to the tale which now to thee I tell.*

From Pagasae—so runs the story old—  
The Argo sailed to Phasis’ distant land,  
And passing by the waves that Hellē hold  
With gliding keel drew near the Mysian  
strand,  
Where on the quiet shore the hero band,  
The voyage done, their limbs did gladly lay,  
Making them beds of leaves upon the sand.  
There Hylas left his knight—ah woe the  
day !—  
And sought the secret streams of fountains far  
away.

Scarce had he started when the wingèd twain,  
Whom Orithyia by the North Wind bred,  
Pursued in haste, his kisses to obtain.  
Zetes and Calais above his head

## *LOVE IN LATIN LITERATURE*

*With downstretched hands in flight alternate  
sped  
To snatch their booty from his cheeks of rose,  
While he beneath their wings for refuge fled  
And waved a branch to scare his treacherous  
foes,  
And so at last escapes and to the wood-nymphs goes.*

*Beneath Arganthus' crest there lies a spring,  
Wherein to bathe the Thynian nymphs  
delight.  
Above uncared-for dewy apples swing,  
And water meadows all around are bright  
With scarlet poppies and with lilies white.  
Childlike he cared not why he had been sent ;  
But now would pluck such flowers as pleased  
his sight  
And now in wonder o'er the fountain bent  
Enraptured by his beauty's imaged blandishment.*

*At last, the task remembered, on his arm  
He leaned, and in his hands the water took.  
At once his beauty did the Naiads charm  
Who 'neath the wave their wonted dance  
forsook,  
And, as the lad bent forward, rose to look,  
And drew him through the water. Loud he  
cried  
For help. Alcides at his voice awoke,  
And from afar with 'Hylas' loud replied ;  
But only Echo answered from the fountain side.*

## THE MIRROR OF VENUS

*Long did the hero seek him on the shore,  
Vexing his weary feet against the stone  
Of cruel mountains : long the pain he bore,  
While every lake he searched and hillside lone,  
And to untamed Ascanius made his moan.  
Ah that his fate may make thee, Gallus, wise !  
Guard well thy Hylas now he is thine own ;  
Nor trust our nymphs with so desired a prize.  
For Fortune often mocks the careless lover's eyes."*

Propertius, I, xx.

Delightful though this is, it is typically Alexandrian in its fantastic blend of satire and romance, and it suffers from that lack of actuality which is the bane of nearly all the Alexandrian writers of verse. Callimachus, Asclepiades, Theocritus, write of love in charming and melodious verse ; but they write in the spirit of the dilettante, not in that of the true lover. Only when we come to Meleager do we find any genuine fervency of emotion. How artificial a love poem can be may be seen in many of the epigrams by Asclepiades and Callimachus still preserved in the Greek Anthology ; even more plainly perhaps in the *Odes* of their greatest Roman pupil, Quintus Horatius Flaccus. In that wonderful collection of occasional verse quite a number of pieces ostensibly treat of 'affaires de cœur' ; but it may be safely said that not one is inspired by the feeling that we call love. The little fat bald-

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headed Epicurean was too much interested in himself, in his art, and in his rôle of moralist, to allow himself ever to be swept away by passion. If love be defined as that feeling which makes a man think a person of the opposite sex more important and more precious than himself, it is probable that Horace, even in his youth, never succumbed to its temptation. The *Odes* are the product of his middle years, and such sentiment in matters of love as they possess is chiefly a feeling of relief at escape from danger. Such is the true motif of the verses to Pyrrha :

*O Pyrrha, Pyrrha golden fair,  
Tell me your lover, tell his name.  
For whom do you bind back your hair  
With its red flame,  
So dainty simple ? Ah poor boy,  
He little knows your treacherous charm,  
Who hopes from you perpetual joy  
Free from alarm !*

*Alas, how often will he find  
That tempests sweep across love's sea,  
And that a woman like the wind  
Can fickle be.*

*For me, yon dripping vestments show  
How barely I escaped of yore.  
And on those waves, if fate allow,  
I sail no more.*

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In all his amatory verse the only real figure is Horace himself: Cinara, Phyllis, Chloë, Lydia, are unsubstantial creatures, some of them perhaps dim reflections of youthful adventures, but mostly phantoms of the study and of the poet's desk. They are not living women of flesh and blood, for Horace never knew a woman well enough to recreate her in literature. As Mr Louis Untermeyer, the most successful of his translators, says :— “Horace is essentially a man’s poet, just as he was essentially a man’s man. He never troubled himself to understand women in any other than a physical way. He never speaks of the quality of their minds but always of the qualities of their bodies. Their whiteness or redness, their arms and ankles, their warmth or frigidity, seem to be the only things about them which interested him. He never regarded or even recognized them as social beings. They were, to him, so many ‘types’; he seems never to have observed them even as individual mentalities. Once in a while he mentions the lower class of women, the peasants, the farmers’ wives, with a grudging sort of respect. But beyond that he does not exert himself.”

As a serious love-poet then Horace may be disregarded. But as an ironical trifler with a sentiment, which he fears by instinct as dangerous, he is completely in his element, and some of his lighter pieces are the perfection of

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‘*bardinage*’. But they must be translated in his own spirit ; in the fashion, for example, in which Mr Untermeyer turns the ‘*Quid fles, Asterie*’.

*Why are you weeping for Gyges ?  
Your lover, though absent, is true.  
As soon as warm weather obliges,  
He'll come back to you.*

*At Oricus, snow bound and grieving,  
He yearns for domestic delights.  
He longs for the moment of leaving ;  
He lies awake nights.*

His hostess, a lady of fashion,  
Is trying to fan up a few  
Stray flames of his fiery passion,  
Lit only for you.

*With sighs and suggestive romances  
She does what a sorceress can,  
But Gyges—he scorns her advances ;  
The noble young man.*

*But you—how about your bold neighbour ?  
Does he please your still lachrymose eye ?  
When he gallops past, flashing his sabre,  
Do you watch him go by ?*

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*When he swims, like a god, down the river,  
Do you dry the perpetual tear ?  
Does your heart give the least, little quiver ?  
Be careful, my dear.*

In these sportive pieces it is highly probable that Horace is exercising his miraculous skill in word-arrangement on an adaptation or free translation from a Greek original. Mr Whichers in his version of *Odes*, I, xxiii, turns Horace's method on himself :—

### *VITAS HINNULEO*

Done by Mr WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

*I met a little Roman maid ;  
She was just sixteen (she said),  
And O ! but she was sore afraid,  
And hung her modest head.*

*A little fawn, you would have vowed,  
That sought her mother's side,  
And wandered lonely as a cloud  
Upon the mountain side.*

*Whene'er the little lizards stirred  
She started in her fear ;  
In every rustling bush she heard  
Some awful monster near.*

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*These joys, my friend, in twain are rent  
Unless some means we can invent ;  
And in their place will come to-day  
Sad desolation and decay.  
You know now all I have to tell :  
Art true or false ? I'll see. Farewell.*

This insistence on the physical side of love is the distinguishing mark of Latin literature. To the ordinary gross Roman love was one of the natural functions, like eating and drinking, and performed with as much coarse vigour. In this spirit Plautus' old reprobate in the *Girl from Casinum* sings :

*"There's nothing in the world like love,  
So delicate and flavoury.  
The sweetest flower has not its power ;  
It is so soft and savoury.  
I wonder why cooks do not try  
To use it as a spice ;  
A tiny tricke our tongues would tickle,  
It is so very nice."*

*Casina, 217, sqq.*

But to the finer spirits in Rome, who, knowing themselves, dreaded that slavery to the senses, which was the lot of most of their countrymen, love often seemed only an overpowering and tyrannical appetite, as dangerous and destructive as a bodily malady. Horace's attitude we have seen : Lucretius, who, if we

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may believe St Jerome, was driven mad by a love potion and wrote the *De Rerum Natura* in the intervals of insanity, enforces the same warning with the seriousness proper to his nature. This is his account of the pathology of love :—

“ He who gets a hurt from the weapons of Venus, whatever be the object that hits him, inclines to the quarter whence he is wounded, and yearns to unite with it and join body with body: for a mute desire gives presage of pleasure. This pleasure is for us, Venus: from that desire is the Latin name of love, from that desire has first trickled into the heart yon drop of Venus' honeyed joy, succeeded soon by chilly care; for though that which you love is away, yet idols of it are at hand and its sweet name is present to the ears . . . The sore gathers strength and becomes inveterate by feeding, and every day the madness grows in violence and the misery becomes aggravated, unless you erase the first wounds by new blows and first heal them when yet fresh, roaming abroad after Venus the pandemian, or transfer to something else the emotions of your mind. . . As when in sleep a thirsty man seeks to drink, and water is not given to quench the burning in his frame, but he seeks the idols of waters and toils in vain and thirsts as he drinks in the midst of the torrent stream, thus in love Venus mocks lovers with idols, nor can bodies satisfy them by all their gazing upon them nor can they with their hands rub aught off the soft limbs, wandering undecided over the whole body. At last when they have united and enjoy the flower of age, when the body now has a presage of delights and Venus is in the mood to sow the fields

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of woman, they greedily clasp each other's body and suck each other's lips and breathe in, pressing meanwhile teeth on each other's mouth ; all in vain, since they can rub nothing off nor enter and pass each with his whole body into the other's body ; for so sometimes they seem to will and strive to do : so greedily are they held in the chains of Venus, while their limbs melt overpowered by the might of the pleasure At length when the gathered desire has gone forth there ensues for a brief while a short pause in the burning passion ; and then returns the same frenzy, then comes back the old madness, when they are at a loss to know what they really desire to get, and cannot find what device is to conquer that mischief ; in such utter uncertainty they pine away by a hidden wound ”

*Lucretius, IV, 1050, sqq.*  
*(Munro's translation )*

So unsatisfactory, according to Lucretius, is love in its physical aspect. But its effects on the mind and the purse are even worse. Love unsatisfied and hopeless brings with it ills past numbering, and even a love that seems prosperous is usually the cause of idleness and expense :—

*Think too how lovers wear their strength away  
And pass their lives beneath another's sway.  
On Babylonian rugs their wealth they spend ;  
Duty neglected lies, and at the end  
Honour falls fainting. But upon her feet  
Fair Sicyonian shoes all comers greet  
With smiling grace, and purple robes worn bare  
Drink in the amorous sweat, while emeralds rare*

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*Shed their green light around her set in gold.  
To buy her coronals estates are sold,  
And Coan gauzes bought for her to don  
Consume the wealth his fathers hardly won.  
Banquets and games and feasts for her are made,  
With brimming cups and viands rich arrayed,  
Unguents and garlands : yet 'tis all in vain ;  
With pleasure's fount a secret spring of pain  
Is ever mingled, and amid the flowers  
Something of bitter poisons the bright hours.  
Now it is Conscience lifts her wakeful head  
And mourns the days in shameful passion sped.  
Now in his mind some doubtful word he turns  
Which she has spoken ; and with anguish burns.  
Or else he sees the traces of a smile  
Upon her face, and straight suspects some wile,  
And fancies she another would beguile.*

*Lucretius, IV, 1120, sqq.*

✓ It is no very pleasant picture that Lucretius draws ; and yet if men regard love as a purely physical appetite—as the Romans usually did—it is to this bitterness of satiety and regret that they will inevitably come. If love is to be the permanent joy that nature meant it to be, it must not be based upon the selfish pleasure of the male but upon reciprocal unselfishness and mutual forbearance. This is where most of the lovers in Latin literature—Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, for example—go so far astray. They fix their affections, often in extreme youth, upon

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a mistress whom they know already by experience to be both unfaithful and unchaste, and then lament incessantly when they find that a miracle has not happened. Their self-pity, indeed, makes most of Latin love poetry rather doleful reading. Few of the Augustans even go so far as the late song writer who says :—

“ *An amor dolor sit,  
An dolor amor sit,  
Utrumque nescio.  
Hoc unum sentio ;  
Fucundus dolor est,  
Si dolor amor est.*”

“ *Does love mean pain or pain mean love ?  
I do not know.  
But this I feel ; if love is pain,  
'Tis pleasure too.*”

Catullus and Propertius, when the first flush of passion is over, are both quite certain of love's nature : it is a burning fire, a consuming malady, a rankling wound, a festering sore, a deadly lethargy ; anything evil that you like to name, but never a blessing or a delight. ‘Odi et amo’—cries Catullus :—

“ *I hate and love, nor can the reason tell :  
But that I love and hate I know too well.*”

‘Me miserum,’ ‘O wretch that I am,’ are the first words in Propertius' *Cynthia*, and his

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preface is surely to our ideas the strangest opening for a book of love poems that can well be imagined :—

*Ab woe is me, of passion naught I knew  
Till Cynthia's glances pierced my poor heart  
through.*

*Love ruthless pressed his heel upon my head,  
My eyes cast down, my pride all vanquished.  
He taught me soon to hate each virgin face  
And reckless live in folly's fond embrace.  
And now my madness burns for all a year,  
While still the anger of the gods I bear.*

*Milanion, friend, by labours undismayed  
Conquered the scorn of the Iasian maid.  
See now he wanders in Parthenian caves,  
And now with shaggy monsters blindly raves,  
Now the Arcadian rocks repeat his groans  
As wounded by Hylaeus' club he moans.  
But so at last he tamed the flying fair ;  
Such power in love have loving deeds and prayer.*

*With me Love lingers still, nor trys his art  
To fly his wonted way, and leave my heart.  
Come then ye seers, well skilled the moon to take  
And on your altars expiation make ; .  
Come now, my lady's heart to me incline  
And make her cheeks turn still more pale than  
mine.  
Then I shall know to you the power belongs  
To draw the stars and streams with magic songs.*

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*And you, dear friends, too late my fall to turn,  
Seek me some help ; with madness now I burn.  
I will endure the steel, the cruel fire,  
If only I may vent my bitter ire.  
Take me to distant lands beyond the sea,  
While so no woman knows where I shall be.  
Do you remain to whom God has been kind  
And grants a mutual bliss with tranquil mind.*

*-Love haunts my days ; he never gives me cease ;  
And Venus turns my nights to bitterness.  
I warn you—shun this hell : constant remain,  
Nor let your heart range loosely o'er love's plain.  
For if too late you give my words belief,  
To you remembrance naught will bring but grief.*

*Propertius, I, i.*

There is something truly pitiable in the position of Catullus and Propertius, for they were both Romans and poets ; in other words they were both the slaves of their senses and the slaves of their imaginations. They snatched greedily at the first easy love that came their way, but they had at the back of their minds an ideal of pure affection to which neither they nor their mistresses could ever attain. The record of this unhappy conflict between spirit and flesh, as they tell it in their verse, has a fascination of its own ; but as space forbids

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here even a summary of their misfortunes, I will quote instead the one modern poem—Ernest Dowson's '*Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae*'—which seems to me to correspond most closely to them.

“Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips  
and mine,  
There fell thy shadow, Cynara ! thy breath was  
shed  
Upon my soul between the kisses and the  
wine ;  
And I was desolate and sick of an old  
passion,  
Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head :  
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara ! in my  
fashion.

All night upon my heart I felt her warm heart  
beat,  
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep  
she lay ;  
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth were  
sweet ;  
But I was desolate and sick of an old  
passion,  
When I awoke and found the dawn was  
grey :  
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara ! in my  
fashion.

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*I have forgot much, Cynara ! gone with the wind,  
Flung roses, roses riotously with the throng,  
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind ;  
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,  
Yea, all the time, because the dance was long :  
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara ! in my fashion.*

*I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,  
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,  
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara ! the night is thine ;  
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,  
Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire :  
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara ! in my fashion."*

Those who expect, then, to find in Catullus and Propertius many love poems of the modern sort will be disappointed. A converted drunkard after his conversion is hardly the sort of person to sing the praises of wine ; and although there are a few pieces in the *Lesbia* and the *Cynthia* collections which paint in glowing colours the mad joys of intoxication, yet taken as a whole both books are manifestos against rather than for love. Ovid is the only Latin poet who seems to have found women, or a woman, permanently attractive, and his is

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the only body of Latin verse which treats of love with genuine sympathy. The pieces translated in this volume will show how wide is his range. Whether he is describing the light amours of Jove and Apollo, the innocent courtship of Pyramus and Acis, or the conjugal devotion of Cœyx and Philemon, he is equally happy. He may be sensual, but he is not morbid ; he may be vulgar, but he is not callous ; he may be frivolous, but he is not sour ; he may indeed have all the faults that have ever been attributed to him, but he has one virtue that redeems them all, he believes in love. In Ovid there is no trace of that detestable misogyny which taints so much of ancient literature, and he would probably have agreed with Goldsmith in thinking that a man should be grateful for ever to all women who are both kind and fair.

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## SELECTIONS FROM THE EARLY POEMS

UNDER the heading of Early Poems are here included the *Ars Amatoria*, *Medicamina Faciei Feminiae*, *Remedia Amoris*, and especially the three books of short love poems known as the *Amores*, many of them addressed to that 'puella' of Ovid's wanton imagination for whom he devises the Greek equivalent word 'Corinna'.



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### THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

HEAR my confession, Love : I am thy prey,  
My hands are in thy chains, I thee obey.  
The fight is over ; now for peace I sue.  
No glory is it to crush a fallen foe.  
Prepare thy triumph : Mars his car will lend  
And for a team her doves thy mother send.  
There myrtle-crowned victorious thou wilt ride  
And through the clamorous crowd thy chariot  
guide,  
While youths and maidens, led in chains along,  
Shall swell the numbers of the captive throng.  
I, thy new spoil, will show my fresh-dealt wound  
Nor heed the fetters that are on me bound.  
The fearful crowd will make the welkin ring  
As ' Hail the conquering hero ' loud they sing.  
Conscience and Shame, and all that is the foe  
Of love, with hands behind them bound will go,  
And at thy side as bodyguard shall be  
Folly and Madness and soft Venery.

*Amores*, I, ii, 19-36.

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **TO HIS MISTRESS**

**TAKE me, and I your slave will be  
As long as life endure,  
Constant in my fidelity  
And in your service surc.**

**Mine is no name of ancient might  
Nor have I lands untold ;  
My father's but a simple knight  
And careful with his gold.**

**But Phoebus and the Muses nine  
Come ever to my call,  
And Bacchus, finder of the vine,  
And Love, who gives me all.**

**My life is pure and free from stain,  
My heart is sound and true.  
No gallant I, of conquests vain,  
But faithful still to you .**

*Amores, I, iii, 5-16.*

*SELECTIONS FROM EARLY POEMS*

**LOVE'S CAMPAIGNS**

EVERY lover is a soldier, and Dan Cupid is his lord :

Every lover is a soldier trained for battle, mark my word.

Mars demands a young man's courage and with Venus 'tis the same.

War and love suit not the aged, bring them nothing else but shame.

Manly spirit, manly vigour in his troops a chief requires,

Manly spirit, manly vigour in her mate a girl desires.

For a captain or a lady both alike must vigil keep

Lying lonely in the darkness and upon the hard ground sleep.

Marching is a soldier's business ; but a lover too will bear

Endless leagues of weary trudging if at last he reach his dear.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Soldiers have to reconnoitrc where the focmen's  
trenches lie ;  
Lovers on their rivals' movements need to keep  
a watchful eyc.  
Soldiers, when a town's beleaguered, if it tarry,  
storm the gate ;  
Lovers who besiege a mistress break the door  
whereat they wait.  
Who unless he were a soldier or a lover would  
endure  
Rain and snow and dreary darkness rather than  
to sleep secure ?

*Amores*, I, ix, 1-20.

*SELECTIONS FROM EARLY POEM*

**THE FATAL BLEMISH**

FAIR as was she who borne to Troy afar  
Became for husbands twain a cause of war ;  
Fair as was Leda whose enrapturcd sight  
The cunning god beguiled with plumage white ;  
Fair as Amymone the day she sped  
Through the dry land with urn upon her head ;  
So fair were you : and timid in my love  
I trembled lest each bird and bull should prove  
A Jupiter disguised. But now I fear  
No more : for now no more I hold you dear.  
You ask the cause ? Well, now you charge a fee.  
That is the reason why you don't please me.

*Amores, I, x, 1-12.*

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **THE OMEN**

Out upon it and alack !  
Here's a nasty blow.  
She has sent my letter back  
Scrawled across it—‘ No.’  
What a cruel word to bring,  
Devil take the horrid thing.

Well, another time I'll know,  
When I deal with women,  
I had better credence show  
To an adverse omen.  
When I gave the note to Nell  
She tripped her foot and almost fell.

If I write another day,  
Prithee, Nell, beware ;  
When you go upon your way  
Walk with sober care.  
Then, it may be, I shall find  
That my lady is more kind.

*Amores, I, xii, 1-6.*

*SELECTIONS FROM EARLY POEMS*

UNWELCOME DAWN

Too soon Aurora brings the day,  
    Too soon she leaves the bed  
Beneath the ocean where her lord  
    Still rests his ancient head.

Why make such haste, O golden queen,  
    Thy chariot to uprear ?  
This is the hour when most I love  
    To feel my darling near.

In the cool breeze the little birds  
    Begin their morning song.  
But our sound sleep is scarce disturbed  
    By the harmonious throng.

Nor men nor maids desire thee yet ;  
    Thy dew-wet steeds restrain.  
Wait for a while, and in thy car  
    Hold back the glistening rein.

*Amores, I, xiii, 1-10.*

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **THE POET'S WISH**

THE flinty rock, the stubborn plough  
Must perish with the lapse of time.  
But thy bright stream shall ever flow,  
O deathless Rhyme !

Kings and their pomp must yield to thee  
And Tagus where the bright gold gleams ;  
To me the fount of Castaly  
More precious seems.

The common herd may dross admire :  
But let Love's myrtle crown my head,  
And Phoebus grant me my desire ;  
To be by lovers read.

*Amores, I, xv, 31-38.*

*SELECTIONS FROM EARLY POEMS*

**FALSE OATHS**

Gods, forsooth ! If gods there be  
They would punish perjury,  
Nor would my girl so fair remain  
When she takes their name in vain.

She would lose the beauty rare  
Of the tresses of her hair,  
If by the gods she falsely swore :  
Now it seems to grow the more.

If there were gods her dainty feft  
Would not be so small and neat,  
Her body be so slim and tall :  
As it is, no change at all.

Well perhaps the truth is this—  
If you are a comely miss  
A power divine is in your eyes  
And heaven smiles at all your lies.

*Amores, III, iii, 1-12.*

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **THE CRITERION**

No one to-day for letters cares one jot—  
‘Poems, forsooth ! They will not boil the  
pot’—

Genius was once esteemed above a crown  
But poverty to-day proclaims the clown.  
My verses pleased the lady, it is true ;  
But where they went the poet may not go.  
A new-made knight, a war creation, she  
For his ill-gotten wealth prefers to me  
She praised my book : and then she bars her  
door—

‘He may have talent, yes : but he is poor.’

*Amores*, III, viii, 1-10.

*SELECTIONS FROM EARLY POEMS*

THE DEAD POET

WEEP, Roman Elegy, weep for thy son  
Thine own Tibullus, chiefest of thy fame.  
Upon the pyre he lies, his life race done ;  
Weep with loose locks responsive to thy name,  
E'en as Aurora Memnon wept of yore,  
As Thetis wept Achilles on the shore.

See how in grief the child of Venus goes,  
His drooping pinions and his beaten breast !  
With quiver overturned and broken bows,  
The torch once gleaming now to ashes pressed.  
His lips are shaken with a mournful sigh  
And tear-wet on his neck his ringlets lie.

No more he grieved when from Iulus' halls  
Aeneas his dear brother dead was borne,  
And that same sorrow Venus now recalls  
As when Adonis by the boar was torn.  
Truly we bards are dear to those on high ;  
We too have something of divinity.

*Amores, III, ix, 1-18.*

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

### THE CONFLICT

I LOVE and hate : I trust you and I doubt you.  
With you I cannot live nor yet without you.

Hate and love within my breast  
Struggle for the sway,  
Will not give me any rest  
Either way.

Oft to hatred I incline  
Brooding o'er your sins,  
Then remember you are mine  
And love wins.

You're a darling, more or less,  
Spite of all you do :  
Though I hate your naughtiness  
I love you.

*Amores*, III, xi, 33-40.

*SELECTIONS FROM EARLY POEMS*

JUNO'S FESTIVAL AT FALISCI

THERE is a grove dark with the forest's shade—  
You'd say that there a god his home has made—  
An altar raised by worshippers of old  
Still hears men's prayer and does their incense  
hold,  
And when the pipe sounds forth its solemn  
strain  
The annual pomp leads hence its ordered train  
Along the flag-decked streets. A joyful throng  
Watch the white heifers, as they pass along,  
Which in Faliscan meadows oft have fed,  
And calves that threaten with unwarlike head.  
Old rams with curving horns go slowly by  
And pigs, a humbler victim, from the sty.  
Only the she-goat doth our Queen abhor :  
For by its treachery in days of yore  
The place was found wherein she lay concealed  
Deep in the forest, and her flight revealed.  
Now children's darts are at the tattler thrown  
And those that wound her take her for their own.

*Amores, III, xiii, 7-22.*

*THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

THE COMPLAISANT SWAIN

I do not ask—for you are fair—  
That you should never have a lover,  
But only that I be not there  
You to discover.

I am no censor to demand  
That you should always virtuous be,  
I only ask that you should stand  
Upon some decency.

The girl who can her fault deny  
Will always at the end be winner ;  
'Tis she who does for pardon cry  
That's hold the sinner.

*Amores*, III, xiv, 1-6.

## *SELECTIONS FROM EARLY POEMS*

### **ADVICE TO WIVES**

MAIDENS, give ear and you shall hear  
What is your chiefest duty.  
Pray listen well and I will tell  
You how to keep your beauty.

'Tis care that makes the barren earth  
Produce the ripened grain.  
'Tis care that brings tree fruit to birth  
With grafting and with pain.

Things that are cared for always please,  
And now each man's a dandy,  
A girl must be as spruce as he  
And have her powder handy.

*Med. Fac. Fem., 1-24.*

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **THE BIRTH OF LOVE**

AT first this world was one disordered frame,  
Stars, earth and sea, in form alike the same ;  
Till heaven rose and land was girt by sea  
And empty chaos endless ceased to be.  
Then beasts the forests, birds the air did keep,  
And fishes hid within the ocean deep,  
While men roamed lonely in the lonely plains  
With brutish strength and bodies void of brains.  
Within the woods on herbs and grass they fed  
And strewed the leaves to make a scanty bed.  
No neighbours had they : each one lived apart,  
Until soft pleasure tamed the savage heart  
When came the day that man and woman stood  
First side by side and found each other good.  
They knew themselves what was their destined  
task,  
Nor had they need for teachers' help to ask.  
Unspoiled by art, love led them gently on,  
Apt pupils both, and lo, the work was done.

*Ars Amatoria*, II, 467-480.

## *SELECTIONS FROM EARLY POEMS*

### **THE PREFACE TO ‘CURES FOR LOVE’**

WHEN first the title of this book he spied—  
‘ Is it then war between us ? ’—Cupid cried.  
‘ Nay, nay,’ said I, ‘ that were indeed a sin,  
When I so often have your soldier been.’  
No Diomede am I who in the fray  
Dared to drive Venus with a wound away.  
I ne’er have lightly loved, as others do ;  
Nor need you doubt ; to love I still am true.  
Let happy swains their mistress still caress  
And live rejoicing in their happiness.  
But those tormented by a cruel maid  
May read this book and in it find some aid.

*Remedia Amoris, 1-16.*

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **THE COUNTRY CURE**

FEW troubles can resist the country's charm :  
If you're in love go seek some rustic farm.  
There train your bulls the heavy yoke to bear  
And turn the stubborn soil with labouring share.  
Consign the fruitful seed to Nature's breast  
And win in time a plenteous interest.  
See how the apples bend each curving bough,  
So that the trees can scarce their weight allow.  
See how the brooklets murmur as they pass,  
And how the sheep rejoice to crop the grass.  
How the shy goats upon the hill-side roam  
And to their kids with milk at even come.  
Hear, too, the shepherd, as his sheep-dogs lie  
Around him, piping loud his melody ;  
While in the woods some heifer lows in vain  
For the lost calf she ne'er will see again.  
The rustic knows the time his vines to dress,  
To pluck the grapes and tread them in the press.  
To smoke the bees from out their plaited hive  
And gain himself the sweets their labour gives.

## *SELECTIONS FROM EARLY POEMS*

He knows to reap the crops his tillage yields  
And rake the gleanings from the close shorn  
fields.  
Spring gives him flowers, summer the harvest's  
pride,  
Autumn brings fruit, winter the fire-side.  
These are the pleasures that you may enjoy  
If you will come: and then the wingèd boy  
Will know his power has gone, and never more  
annoy.

*Rem. Amor., 169-198.*

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **THE CURE BY CHANGE**

WHEN Agamemnon saw the captive maid,  
Chrysëis, in her priestess' robes arrayed,  
He burned with passion and would fain have  
kept

Her as his mistress. But her father wept,  
The silly dotard, and went all about  
The camp, and there began to bawl and shout  
How she had been disgraced : he did not know  
Nature meant maids such bounties to bestow.  
So Calchas, with Achilles at his side,  
Came to the Greeks and said :—“ All ways we've  
tried,

And all are vain : the girl had best be sent  
Back to her father.” Therefore back she went.  
Then Agamemnon :—“ One alike in name,  
Save for some letters, and in form the same  
Achilles has ; and her I now require,  
Since my own girl you've given to her sire.  
If he is wise, he will give up his dear  
To me : if not he'll find who's master here.

## *SELECTIONS FROM EARLY POEMS*

Nor need you Greeks reproach me now, or  
blame;  
Surely a chief on captives has first claim.  
Thersites might as well be king instead  
Of me, if I can't take a girl to bed."  
He spake. That night Brisēis with him lay;  
And so a new love chased the old away.

*Rem. Amor.*, 471-484.



## LETTERS FROM THE HEROINES

THE *Heroines* is a collection of imaginary letters—twenty-one in all—supposed to be written by women to their more or less faithless husbands and lovers. The last six letters, which are arranged in pairs, a letter and reply from Paris and Helen, Hero and Leander, and Acontius and Cydippe, are of doubtful authorship.



## PENELOPE TO ULYSSES

*ULYSSES, prince of Ithaca, son of Laërtes, father of Telemachus, and husband of Penelope, was for twenty years absent from his home ; ten years fighting against Troy, ten years seeking to return. During his absence his wife had to maintain his authority as best she could, and to resist the many neighbouring princes who sought her in marriage. The subject-matter of this letter Ovid draws almost entirely from the Odyssey, but his Penelope bears more resemblance to a shrewd Roman matron of his own day than to Homer's heroine.*

THIS letter to Ulysses now I send,  
My laggard spouse, that so he quickly wend  
. His journey home : there is no need to write  
In answer ; come yourself and glad my sight.  
Troy surely now has fallen, Troy abhorred  
By Grecian women, and its aged lord  
With his proud palace in the dust is laid—  
Scarce was he worth the price that we have  
paid.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Ah ! would that wanton Paris, on that day  
When he to Sparta winged his watery way,  
Had met his death beneath the raging sea.  
For then I should not thus deserted be  
Alone in my cold bed, while with sad tears  
I weep the tardy passing of slow years,  
Nor should I need within this widowed room  
To cheat the night by working at my loom.

True love is ever fearful. I dreamed more  
Of dangers round you than you ever bore,  
And thought on you, on you above them all  
The fury of the foemen's rage would fall.  
At Hector's name my cheeks went deathly pale ;  
And if perchance I heard the woeful tale  
Of young Antilochus and how he fell,  
Weeping for him I wept for you as well.  
Patroclus slain in armour not his own  
Made me lament that guile is oft o'erthrown.  
Tlepolemus by Lycian spears struck dead  
Renewed my grief and gave fresh cause for  
dread.

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

Aye, every Greek that perished was for me  
Reason for tears and chilling agony.  
But kindly heaven on my love has smiled,  
And saved Ulysses for his wife and child  
The Greeks are home, their leaders done with  
    toil,  
And now our gods receive the foreign spoil.  
Brides bring thank-offerings for their lord's  
    return  
And smiling watch the altars brightly burn,  
Hanging entranced upon their husband's lips  
As he narrates proud Ilium's eclipse,  
While elders stern and trembling girls enjoy  
To hear the story of the fall of Troy,  
Watching him as he draws a battle plan  
Upon the board to show how it began,  
His finger wetted, that some drops of wine  
May Troy and all her citadels design—  
“Here flowed the Simois ; here's Sigean land ;  
Here Priam's lofty palaces did stand ;  
Here Ajax, here Ulysses lay at night ;  
Here mangled Hector scared the steeds to  
    flight.”

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Full well I know the story ; I was told  
All that the ancient Nestor could unfold  
To our Telemachus. I learned, though late,  
Of Rhesus' ending and of Dolon's fate.  
That one was slain by guile and one in sleep.  
O rashly bold ! Could not my memory keep  
You from such daring as to attack the foe,  
Helped but by one, and in the night to go  
And slay a hundred Thracians, who of yore  
The name of 'Prudent' and of 'Cautious' bore?  
Ah, how I trembled then, ah, how I feared  
Until the ending of the tale I heard  
That through our camp, which rang with your  
brave deeds,  
You rode triumphant on the Ismarian steeds !

But what avails that Troy has been dethroned  
And that her walls are levelled with the ground,  
If a war widow lonely still I stay  
And my dear lord is ever far away ! .  
Though now there's corn where once great  
Ilium stood  
And the rich ground is fat with Phrygian blood,

*LETTERS FROM THE "HEROINES"*

Though bones disturbed, start up behind the  
plough

And in the ruined halls lush grasses grow  
For me alone Troy's battlements remain :  
All other women have their men again.

O cruel, cruel ! tell me where you hide  
And why my victor tarries from my side.

Each stranger ship that comes unto our land  
Is plied with questions, and with my own hand  
I write a sheet which they to you shall give  
If ever they may find you yet alive.

I sent to Nestor on the Pylian shore :  
A doubtful tale I heard and nothing more.  
I sent to Sparta : naught could Sparta say.  
O, tell me in what land you lingering stay !

Now I regret the vows I made in vain  
Better for me if Troy had ne'er been ta'en.  
Then others would have shared my sorrow here  
And I should nothing have but war to fear.  
But now I live in doubt : the field is wide  
And terrors close about on every side.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Countless the dangers of the sea and land  
And all as reasons for your absence stand.  
Perchance I am a fool to be afraid.  
You may lie captured by a foreign maid,  
And even now be saying how your wife  
Thinks that her wool's the finest thing in life.  
Oh, may this charge be false, nor you be free  
And yet unwilling to return to me !

My father bids me leave my widowed state  
And chides me oft because I for you wait.  
But though he chides me, I will constant be,  
Ulysses' wife am I, Penelope.  
Still to my prayers he lends a willing ear  
And is content my plea of love to hear ;  
But there are others who upon me press  
And vex me with their wanton naughtiness.  
The princes who from steep Dulichium come,  
And those who in Zacynthus have their home,  
And Samos, from me never will depart  
Eating away your substance and my heart,  
Pisander, Medon, and Eurymachus  
And Polybus and proud Antinous,  
And all the rest, who while you are away  
Make of your hard-won wealth their shameful  
prey,

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

The beggar Irus, and—O shame most deep—  
Melanthius who slays for them your sheep.

Help then the weak : there aic but three of us,  
I, old Laertes, young Telemachus ;  
And he was late in ambush all but slain  
When in despite of them he crossed the main.  
Giant in due course, I pray you, powers divine,  
That lie may close his father’s eyes and mine !  
My nurse, the neat-herd, and the trusty slave  
Who guards the swine are all the help we have.  
As for Laertes, he is frail and old,  
Nor can his throne against these foemen hold—  
Our son will stronger grow, if the fates spare,  
But now he needs a father’s help and care—  
Nor have I power to drive them from my  
hall :  
Hasten and come as saviour for us all.  
You have a child—I pray you find him still—  
Who should in youth be moulded to your will.  
Think of Laertes : still he lingers on  
In hope that you may close his eyes, his son.  
You left me here a girl ; but it will be  
An old, old woman soon that you will see.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

### **PHYLLIS TO DEMOPHOON**

*Demophoön, son of Theseus, prince of Athens, while sailing on his way to Troy was driven by adverse winds to the shores of Thrace. There he was entertained by Phyllis, who had succeeded her father Sithon as ruler of the land, and after winning her love promised to return and claim her as his bride. The promise was never kept, and according to a later legend Phyllis was changed into an almond-tree.*

YOUR Thracian Phyllis writes, Demophoön,  
Complaining that the promised day has gone  
And still you are away, although you swore  
Within a month to seek again my shore.  
Four times the moon has waxed and four times  
waned  
And yet no Attic barque the beach has gained.  
Love counts each day : count also, and you'll see  
'Tis not too soon that now you hear from me.

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

Hope lingers long ; and though alone I grieve  
I scarcely yet your treachery can believe.  
Oft for your sake to my own heart I've lied  
And self-deceived ‘ Behold his galleys ’ cried.  
Theseus I cursed, because your steps he stayed,  
And yet perchance it was not he forbade—  
Or feared lest as for Thrace you trimmed your  
    sails

Your barque had been engulfed by furious gales.  
Oft for your safety to the gods I prayed  
And on their altars gifts of incense laid,  
And when I saw that sea and sky were clear,  
I cried :—‘ If he is well he'll soon be here.’

✓ My love invented reasons for delay  
And saw you checked upon your eager way  
By obstacles and dangers—dangers bred  
By the fond thoughts whereon my passion fed.  
But still you linger far, and are not moved  
Either by thoughts of her whom once you loved  
Or by your plighted vows, which to the wind  
You cast that day your sails left me behind.  
Ah, me ! those sails have ne'er returned again  
And all those plighted vows I find are vain.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

What have I done amiss, I pray you tell,  
Save that perchance I loved you all too well ?  
My only fault is that I took you in ;  
And that was kindness surely, not a sin.  
Where's now your promise and your plighted  
troth,  
Your vows of passion and your bridal oath ?  
Where is that Hymen whom you swore in  
vain  
Vowing that you would always true remain ?  
You called upon the restless tossing sea  
That you had left, your witness then to be.  
You called upon the god, your father's sire,  
Who stirs and calms the waves at his desire.  
You called on Venus and her potent darts  
And those red brands that fire maidens' hearts.  
You called on Juno with her mystic rites  
Whose torch doth guard the bed on marriage  
nights.  
Come then ye gods nor of your vengeance  
fail  
And let him now before your anger quail.

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

They say :—‘ She chose a stranger : let her go  
To learned Athens now, and time will show  
If she was wise. Meanwhile, and from to-day,  
O'er warlike Thrace another shall hold sway'—  
A curse upon such judgments, where success  
Is made criterion of righteousness.  
If but your galleys here again were seen,  
They'd cry—‘ Well done, O wise and gracious  
queen.'

But I have not done well. No more you'll come  
To dwell beside me in my royal home.  
No more when wearied you your limbs will lave  
In the cool depths of our Bistonian wave.  
Ah, often still I think of how that day,  
When your ships ready for the voyage lay,  
You dared your arms about my neck to throw  
And with long kisses set my lips aglow.  
Our tears were mingled and you made lament  
That to your sails a favouring wind was sent,  
While at the last you cried—‘ Expect me soon.  
I will return, your own Demophoón.’

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

‘Expect,’ forsooth : you never meant to keep  
Your promise, or again to cross the deep.  
And yet I do expect you. Come, though late,  
And let the error be but one of date.

But why entreat ? Perchance to-day your love,  
Which did to me, alas, so cruel prove,  
Another girl possesses for her own,  
And from your heart all thoughts of me have  
flown ;  
So that you even have forgot my name  
And wonder from what land this ‘Phyllis’  
came.

Well, I will tell you. I am that poor maid  
Who, when a sea-tossed wanderer you strayed  
To distant Thrace, gave you a place of rest  
And to my haven welcomed you as guest.  
My purse was yours, yours was my kingdom’s  
store ;  
I gave you much, I would have given more ;  
All those broad realms where once Lycurgus  
ruled,  
Scarce by a woman’s orders to be schooled,

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

### OENONE TO PARIS

*Before the birth of Paris, Hecuba, wife of King Priam, was warned in a dream that her child would be a flaming torch of destruction to Troy. The boy was therefore exposed on Mount Ida, and being found by some shepherds was reared as their son. His manly beauty, however, won for him the love of the nymph Oenonē and also marked him out as judge when the three goddesses came down to decide their claim to the golden apple. By the help of Venus he was then restored to his rightful place as Priam’s son and took Helen from her husband Menelaus.*

AND will you read this? Will your wife allow?

Read on: it is no Greek that writes you now,  
But I, Oenonē, who upon the hills  
Of Phrygia dwelt amid their gushing rills;  
"Tis I, your injured love, who thus indite  
A letter to you, who are mine by right.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

What power divine has ruined all my life,  
What have I done that I'm no more your wife ?  
Pain that you've earned you bear with patient  
heart,  
But sorrow undeserved—ah, there's the smart !  
You were not then so great a man when I  
A nymph consented in your arms to lie.  
The truth must out : you then were but a slave  
When I to you my earthly godhead gave.  
Oft with your flocks we slept beneath a tree,  
The leaves and grass a bed for you and me,  
Or in some humble cot on beds of hay  
Waited until the frost should pass away.  
I knew each covert on the country-side,  
I showed the places where the wolf cubs hide,  
I stretched the nets and drew their meshes tight.  
I led the hounds along the windy height,  
The trees you cut still keep their marking clear  
And all can read 'Oenonē' graven there.  
As the trunks grow, so grows my name withal :  
Grow on and keep it for my funeral.

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

Grow too, thou poplar, by the water dark  
That hast this couplet on thy wrinkled bark:  
“ When Paris shall without Oenonë live,  
Then Xanthus’ stream shall turn and back-  
ward drivc.”  
So turn ye waters and be backward bent—  
Oenone’s gone, but Paris lives content.

It was that day your love’s cold change began  
When the threc goddesses came to a man,  
Our lady Venus, and Minerva bare  
Of all the panoply that makes her fair,  
And with them Juno the great queen of heavn,  
That judgment on their beauty might be given.  
You told me of it, and a sudden chill  
Shot through my trembling breast foreboding  
ill.  
I went for counsel to each wrinkled crone  
And grey-haired elder : help for me was none.  
I feared the worst and saw approaching nigh  
Sorrow and anguish and calamity.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Soon for your fleet the lofty firs were felled  
And the blue waves your well-pitched galley shld.  
You wept to leave me—that you must allow—  
And tears of grief from both alike did flow.  
I felt your arms about my neck entwine,  
E'en as around an elm tree clings the vine.  
How oft your comrades smiled to hear you say—  
‘ Head winds again ! We cannot sail to-day ’—  
For gentle gales were blowing from the stern.  
How often would you leave me, and return  
Yet once again another kiss to seek  
And scarce endured the parting word to speak.

And now your canvas fluttered in the wind  
And your swift oars left their white trail behind.  
As you depart my gaze attends you yet,  
And with my falling tears the sand is wet ;  
I prayed the Nereids—‘ Bring him o'er the  
sea ’—  
You whose return has ruin brought for me.  
My vows were granted for my rival's gain ;  
She has the profit of them, I the pain.

## *LETTERS FROM THE "HEROINES"*

A mass of native rock with towering sides  
Looks o'er the deep and fronts the foaming tides.  
Thence your returning galley did I view  
And longed to throw me down and swim to you.  
But while I lingered on your topmost prow  
I saw a dress of gleaming purple show,  
Nor did it seem such garb as you would wear.  
On sped your ship, and as it came more near  
I trembled to behold a woman's face,  
And — maddening sight — she lay in your  
cmbrace.

Then did I beat my breast and rend my gown,  
While on my cheeks my nails tore furrows down.  
Great Ida echoed with my cries of grief  
And weeping 'mid my rocks I sought relief.  
So, left by you, may Helen lonely be  
And bear herself the wound that she dealt me !

She suits you now, that jade who here has come  
Leaving her lawful husband and her home.  
But when, a shepherd poor, you fed your sheep  
'Twas I, Oenone, who your house did keep.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

I crave no gold, forsooth, nor regal hall,  
Nor that men should me Priam's daughter call—  
A nymph, 'tis true, is worthy of a king  
And no disgrace on Hecuba I bring—  
But I deserve, and wish, to be a queen ;  
A sceptre in my hands were fitting seen.  
Despise me not that once on leaves I lay ;  
A couch of purple should be mine to-day.

Remember, too, my love no danger brings,  
No deadly war, no ships with vengful wings.  
Strife is the dower your runaway has brought  
And Helen by the Greeks in arms is sought.  
Go to Antenor or Deiphobus,  
Or with Polydamas your case discuss,  
Ask Hector or King Priam : they'll agree  
That you should give her back ; for well they  
see,  
By years taught wisdom, that one's native land  
Before a stolen wench should surely stand.  
A bad beginning this : the husband's cause  
Is just ; you fight against high heaven's laws

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

Think not, if you are wise, that she'll be true  
Who did so soon forget her vows for you.  
As Menelaus cries out on his bed  
From which a stranger has his consort led,  
So you one day will cry : when virtue's gone  
No art can bring it back : once lost, 'tis done.  
She loves you now ; she loved him once no less,  
Who now, fond fool, is left in loneliness.  
Happy Andromachè, who by kind fate  
Has won a constant and a loyal mate !  
Like Hector you should have been true through  
all ;  
But you are lighter than the leaves that fall  
And flutter in the breezes, dry and scar ;  
More quick to move than is the topmost ear  
Of wheat upon its stalk, that bends and sways  
Burnt by the constant heat of summer days.

Your sister warned me once—ah, I recall  
Her presage now and her wild looks withal !—  
“ What art thou doing ? Why thus sow in sand,  
And plough with useless oxen barren land ?

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Beware the Grecian heifer who shall come  
And ruin bring to thee, thy land, thy home.  
Sink her foul ship this day beneath the flood  
And with it all its load of Phrygian blood"—  
She ceased : my golden locks stood stiff with  
fright,  
And from her maids she sped in frenzied flight.

Alas, too true have been her prophecies :  
That heifer now within my pasture lies,  
Though she be fair, she has a wanton's mind,  
To choose a stranger youth and leave behind  
Her home and native gods. Surely, before  
To-day she was ravished from her father's shore  
By some one—Theseus, was it ?—and I trow  
She was no virgin when he let her go.  
Upon her first his vigour he would prove.  
How do I know, you ask ? Ah, well, I love !  
Cloak if you will her fault beneath the plca  
Of violence and forced complicity ;  
But one so often ravished, I should say,  
Herself is pleased to fall and shows the way.

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

I have been faithful to you, a pure maid ;  
Nor with your own coin have you been repaid.  
The wanton satyrs oft have sought to take  
Me for their own, but hidden in a brake  
I have escaped them ; nor on Ida’s crown  
Could pine-girt Faunus win me for his own.  
Great Phoebus too, who built the walls of Troy,  
Loved me right well, and gave me to enjoy  
His gifts of healing ; every root that grows  
And every healing herb Oenonē knows.  
Alas that love cannot by herbs be healed  
Nor by the art which he to me revealed.  
Still, what the fruitful earth may not bestow  
Nor god, that aid to you I well might owe ;  
And I deserve it. To my bridal bower  
I brought no Greeks or bloody strife as dower.  
Let us renew our childhood’s love again  
And I for ever will your bride remain.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

### *HYPsipylē to Jason*

*When Jason, with the Argonauts, was on his way to Colchis in quest of the Golden Fleece, his galley put in to Lemnos. The island was then inhabited solely by women ruled by Queen Hypsipylē, the men, with the one exception of the old king Thoas, having recently been put to death by their incensed wives. The adventurers accordingly were well received, and on Jason promising to return for her, Hypsipyle granted to him the last favours. This letter is supposed to be written after Jason's arrival in Greece in company with Medea.*

THEY tell me now to Thessaly you've come  
Bringing the golden fleece in safety home.  
My greetings then : but still a line from you  
I might have had, to tell me it was true.  
Winds may have checked you though your heart  
    was fain  
To pass my way and see my realm again ;

## *LETTERS FROM THE "HEROINES"*

Yet even then some word you might have sent.  
Surely I've earned that much acknowledgment.

• Why was it rumour brought to me the news  
And not a letter which I could peruse ?  
How you had yoked the bulls of Mars, and flung  
The seed wherfrom those arm'd warriors sprung  
Self-slain, and how the sleepless dragon coiled  
About the fleece was by your hand despoiled.  
Think of my pride if I to doubting ears  
Could say—‘ In his own writing it appears ! ’

Neglectful you have been ; but why complain ?  
I must be thankful, if I yours remain.

A foreign witch, they tell me, in my stead  
Lives with you now and shares your marriage  
bed.

But love is ever fond : would I were wrong  
Nor that such charges could to you belong !  
A stranger came from Thessaly of late,  
And ere he scarce had passed beyond my gate,

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

I asked—‘ How fares my Jason ? Prithee tell.’  
But at my words his eyes in trouble fell.  
I tore my robe and said with bitter cry,  
‘ Is he alive ? If not I too will die.’  
‘ He lives,’ the stranger answered : but my  
breast  
Was racked with anxious fears, nor could I rest  
Until he swore that he had dwelt with you  
And I his oath believed that he spoke true.

When I grew calm I begged him tell me all ;  
And he narrated how at your stern call  
The brazen bulls of Mars obeyed the plough ,  
And how the serpent’s teeth your hand did sow,  
As seed wherefrom a warrior host arose  
Slain by their fellows, so that their death-throes  
And birth-pangs both were measured by one  
day ;  
And how the snake was conquerd. ‘ Tell me,  
pray,  
Is Jason still alive ? ’ again I cried,  
‘ Twixt hope and fear still swaying with the tide.

*LETTERS FROM THE "HEROINES"*

But while he told his story, he revealed  
The truth which from me he had fain concealed.  
Where is thy promise, where that nuptial brand  
More fit beside a funeral pyre to stand ?  
Mine was no secret love : our marriage rite  
Juno and wreathed Hymen did unite.  
And yet, methinks, some Fury, and not they,  
Carried the torch before me on that day.

What with the Minyac, piay, had I to do ?  
With Argo, or with steersman Tiphs too ?  
Aeëtes never in my country dwelt.  
Nor could you find with me the golden pelt.  
Fate led me on : else it had been my plan  
By women's might to expel the stranger, man.  
My girls know well the way, and would have  
been  
A sure protection to their injured queen.

But, as it was, I took you to my town  
And gave you heart and palace for your own.  
Two summers and two winters here you spent ;  
And when at the third harvest forth you went,

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Compelled at last to sail the foaming seas,  
It was in tears you spoke me words like these :—  
‘ Though I must go, God grant I come again !  
‘ Thine am I now and thine I will remain.  
‘ And do thou keep our unborn child, that we  
‘ United both in parenthood may be.’  
So did you speak ; and I remember yet  
How more words your tears a barrier set.

And then you went on board, last of your band,  
And Argo with the wind flew from my land.  
With bellying sail she rides the waters free ;  
You shoreward look, and I look out to sea.  
There is a tower whose windows face the tide  
And give an open prospect far and wide.  
Thither I haste, my checks with tears all wet  
And weeping gaze : my eyes fresh vigour get  
From my fond passion, and more keen appear  
Than they were wont to be when you were near.  
Think then of those chaste tears and timid vows  
Which to the gods Hypsipyle still owes.

*LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

Nay, shall I pay them for Medea's sake  
That she therefrom the benefit may take ?  
Shall I bring victims for what I have lost ?  
My heart mid waves of love and wrath is tossed.  
I was not free from care : I lived in dread  
Your sire would choose a bride for you instead.  
I feared the Greeks—but to this wound of mine  
Is dealt me by a foreign concubine.  
A common witch, no decent comely wife,  
She cuts her hellish herbs with magic knife,  
And draws the moon down from her course  
begun  
And hides in gloom the houses of the sun.  
She bridles streams and checks the torrent's  
race,  
The rocks she moves and forests from their place.  
She wanders through the graves with hair  
unbound  
And picks the bones from out the smoking  
mound.  
Puppets of wax she shapes with deadly art  
And with a pin-thrust stabs some absent heart.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

And other things she does which are not well  
For honest hands to do or lips to tell.  
By looks and love a husband we should win :  
That is enough : love magic is a sin.  
How can you hold a witch within your arm,  
How in your chamber sleep without alarm  
While she is roaming, how enjoy one hour  
Of darkness when you know her magic power !  
As once the fire-breathing bulls she broke  
So now she keeps you tamed beneath her yoke,  
And as she did enslave the serpents wild  
With that same art your soul she has beguiled.

Moreover, to your deeds she adds her name,  
And she the wife obscures her husband's fame.  
Your foes impute success to some black spell  
And all the crowd believes the tale they tell :—  
‘ It was this Phasian wench, not Aeson's son,  
‘ Who by her arts the golden ram's fleece won.’  
Ask your good mother, ask your aged sire  
If they for kin a northern witch desire.  
Let her in Scythia's marshes find a man  
Or from the Tanäis or her own clan.

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

O fickle Jason, lighter than the wind,  
Why do your vows leave not a trace behind !  
Mine were you once, but mine you are no more.  
Let me be yours, as yours I was before.  
If you are pleased by names and lineage grand,  
My father Thoas, you may understand,  
Was son of Bacchus and his Cretan bride,  
Whose crown outshines the stars at eventide.  
Lemnos with its rich fields will be my dower  
And I, with all its folk, will own your power.

I am a mother too : rejoice with me :  
The father made my pains felicity.  
And by Lucina’s grace twin sons are ours,  
One pledge of my affection, one of yours.  
‘ Who are they like, you ask ? ’ In them I  
find  
All of their father save his fickle mind.  
To you as envoys they were almost sent,  
Had not Medea stayed my fond intent,  
More cruel than the cruellest stepdame,  
Ready for every crime and void of shame.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Would she have spared my babes, who had the  
heart  
To tear her brother's quivering limbs apart  
And strew them o'er the fields ? And this is she  
Whom, madman, you have now preferred to me !  
A maid unwed she harboured at your side.  
I was your lawful spouse, an honest bride.  
I saved my father's life, she hers betrayed :  
She left the Colchians, I in Lemnos staycd.  
But what avails it ? Virtue yields to guilt  
And on her ciimes a marriage bed she's built.

I blame the vengeance that my women wrought  
Upon their men of yore ; but still we ought  
Not wonder overmuch, for e'en the weak  
Goaded by pain will retribution seek.  
Suppose a storm had forced you o'er the main,  
You and your mistress, to my shores again,  
And I had come to meet you with the rest,  
My infant babes upon my tender breast,  
Surely you would have prayed a chasm wide

*LETTERS FROM THE "HEROINES"*

In earth to open that you there might hide.  
How could you bear your children twain to see  
And how endure, you wretch, to look on me ?  
Death was the price your treachery should have  
paid,  
But still by me unharmed you would have  
stayed.  
No pity you deserve, 'tis true : and yet  
My heart is soft and ready to forget.  
But oh, that wanton's blood I would have shed  
With eager hand, and cast it o'er my head  
And yours, whom she by witchcraft stole away,  
Medea to Medea I that day.

And now, if Jove on high attends my prayer,  
I ask that she an equal pain may bear,  
She who into my bed has dared to steal,  
And in full measure my affliction feel.  
As I, a wife and mother, lone remain  
So may her husband go and children twain.  
Her gains ill-gotten may she lose them all,  
And exiled for a shelter vainly call ;

## ***THE MIRROR OF VENUS***

To father and to brother cause of woe,  
To husband and to children deadly foe,  
Let her explore the sea, the earth, the air,  
Stained with foul murder, helpless, in despair.

And now enough. My marriage joys have flown  
And I King Thoas' child am left alone.  
One final word, before this hour has sped :—  
“ Live on and may my curses haunt your bed.”

*LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

HYPERMNESTRA TO LYNCEUS

*Danäus and Aegyptus, grandsons of Libya, herself grand-daughter of Io, quarrelled, as brothers were wont to do, over their ancestral throne. Danäus was the elder, but Aegyptus had the advantage of fifty sons, while Danäus only had fifty daughters. Aegyptus proposed that the cousins should intermarry, and Danäus, feigning to consent, instructed his daughters to kill their husbands on the wedding night. In forty-nine cases his order was obeyed ; but Lynceus was spared by Hypermnestra, who writes this letter from prison, and afterwards took vengeance for his brothers' murder.*

Of all your brothers you alone remain ;  
The rest, by their brides' guilt, are lying slain.  
I am a prisoner in close fetters bound ;  
My kindness has a cruel penance found.  
I would not kill you ; so I now am blamed  
Because to do a crime I was ashamed.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Better he blamed than thus my father please :  
For innocence alone can give one ease.  
Let him my marriage torch upon me use  
And burn me at the altar, if he choose ;  
Or pierce me with the sword he did supply,  
That, while the bridegroom lives, the bride may  
die :  
Yet never will he force me to repent  
My kindness, whatsoe'er the punishment.  
Repent ! He and my sisters should begin.  
Repentance is the destined wage of sin.

E'en now the thought of that accursèd night  
Makes my heart tremble, and I shrink in fright.  
You think perhaps I would have murdered  
you :  
I fear to write of crimes that others do.  
But yet to tell the tale I will essay—  
'Twas twilight, not yet night, no longer day,  
When we were taken to our nuptial bed,  
To old Aegyptus as his sons' brides led.

*LETTERS FROM THE "HEROINES"*

Lamps set in gold about us brightly shone  
And incense on the unwilling hearth was  
thrown ;  
But though the people loud on Hymen cried  
Nor he nor Juno to their shouts replied.

At last, while songs of merriment resound,  
Wine-flushed, their dripping locks with garlands  
crowned,  
Our bridegrooms burst into the marriage bower,  
Where every couch had sudden death for dower.  
Heavy with wine and food at ease they slept  
While all the town a peaceful stillness kept.  
When lo, methought a dying groan I heard !  
Nay, 'tis no fancy. 'Tis the thing I feared.  
Cold ran my blood ; my very heart seemed  
chilled  
And in my bed I lay with horror filled  
As the corn quivers in the gentle breeze,  
As the leaves shake upon the poplar trees,  
So did I shake and more ; while you asleep,  
Lulled by the nuptial draught, my side did keep.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Yet soon I thought of my stern sire's command  
And swiftly grasped the sword with trembling  
hand.

Three times it rose—no falsehoods will I tell—  
To slay you in your sleep : three times it fell.  
Let me the truth confess ; the deadly blade  
My father gave me to your throat I laid.  
But fear and love would not the crime allow,  
And my chaste arm refused to deal the blow.  
I rent my purple robe, I tore my hair  
And murmured my complaint to the still air:—  
“ Stern is my father : I must do his word.  
“ This one must join his brethren 'neath my  
sword.

“ 'Tis true that I am but a tender maid  
“ And from the knife my hand shrinks back  
afraid.  
“ But I must pattern by my sisters take ;  
“ All must be slain, I know, ere they awake.  
“ Yet, nay : if murder I could ever do  
“ It were my own heart that I should pierce  
through.

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

“They by their violence deserve to die,  
“And we endure an exile’s misery ;  
“But granted their deserts, where’s my offence  
“That I should not preserve my innocence ?  
“What has a girl to do with sword and spear ?  
“My distaff and my wool to me is more dear.”

Such was my murmured plaint : a tearful tide  
Fell from my eys upon you by my side :  
And as you stretched your arms to clasp your  
wife

You had unwitting almost touched the knife.  
Then did I think of what must soon befall,  
Of my stern father and his rage withal,  
And his fierce minions, and how dawn was nigh ;  
And roused you from your sleep with eager cry :—  
“Awake : alone you have survived these hours :  
Awake : or else eternal sleep is yours.”  
To action wakened, by our couch you stand  
And ask what means the sword within my hand.  
‘No words’ ; I cry, ‘while night allows, away !’  
And so, while night allows, you fly, I stay.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Soon morning came and Danäus counts the slain  
And finds that you alone unscathed remain.  
He rages that of all his brother's brood  
One still is lacking from that tale of blood,  
And I am dragged away, in prison thrown,  
Haled by my hair. Such wage my kindness won.

'Tis clear that Juno's wrath still haunts our race  
From those far distant days when Io's face  
Was changed, and she, a wandering steer, was  
driven  
O'er all the earth until she rose to heaven.  
And yet, methinks, 'twas punishment enow  
To turn a mortal maid into a cow,  
And rob her of her beauty, that no more,  
Jove should lie with her as he lay of yore.  
The heifer stood beside her father's wave,  
And saw the horns she never thought to have.  
She tried to speak : a bellow came instead :  
And shape and sound alike filled her with dread.  
. Why rage, unhappy maid, why in despair  
Count the four feet that now thy members  
bear,

*LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

Thou wert Jove’s mistress, but thou now must  
    ease

With leaves and grass thy hunger and appease  
Thy thirst in running water. Juno’s fear  
Has changed the form which was to Jove too  
    dear.

Bewildered thou wilt gaze in fear around  
And dread thy new-made horns lest they should  
    wound.

Or on the naked ground in nakedness  
Wilt lie, whose wealth once earned great Jove’s  
    caress.

O’er land and sea and over all the streams  
Whom as his children mighty Ocean deems  
Thou wilt essay escape, but all in vain ;  
For still thy heifer shape thou shalt retain.  
Why haste ? Pursuer and pursued are one,  
Thine own companion, thine own guide  
    alone.

Naught will avail thee till at last Nile’s  
    river

The union of maid and steer shall sever.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

But why repeat a tale of long ago ?  
These years have given me enough of woe.  
My father and my uncle are at war ;  
I live in exile from my home afar.  
Of all my cousins only one survives ;  
I mourn the dead and those who took their  
lives.  
Brothers and sisters too, I both have lost,  
And must lament alike for either host.  
But, look you, I myself shall tortured be  
To death, because your life was spared by me.  
When I for kindness to my doom am sent,  
What shall the guilty have for punishment ?  
You only live of our fair hundred : all  
Have met their death and I with them shall fall.

If for your cousin you have any love  
And for my help your gratitude would prove,  
Then, Lynceus, come to save me now, I  
pray ;  
Or else, when I from life have passed away,

*LETTERS FROM THE "HEROINES"*

Put me by stealth upon a funeral pyre  
And moisten with your tears my ashes' fire.  
And grave these words upon it, for the eyes  
Of passers by : HERE HYPERMNESTRA  
LIES.

SHE SAVED HER COUSIN FROM THE  
CRUEL SWORD,  
AND FOR HERSELF TOOK DEATH AS  
HER REWARD.

More would I write if I could longer bear  
These heavy chains which numb my hand with  
fear.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

### SAPPHO TO PHAÖN

*According to the prevalent tradition, Sappho of Lesbos in middle life fell enamoured of a youth Phaön, and on his proving unfaithful flung herself in despair from the Leucadian Rock, which lies close to the temple of Apollo at Actium. This letter is written before she finally resolves on the perilous leap. It is one of the most interesting of the series, and some passages may well be taken from poems by Sappho, now lost to us.*

I WONDER when your eyes this letter meet  
If you will know at once who sent the sheet ;  
Or if you could not tell from whom it came  
Until you read the author Sappho's name.  
Perchance you ask why couplets I indite  
Who once was wont in lyric strains to write.  
It is that in this verse I find relief  
From love, and lyric songs suit not with grief.  
For as a harvest-field with wind-borne fire  
Burns all unchecked, so burn I with desire.

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

But now Sicilian damsels take your eve.  
Avaunt, my native land ! In Sicily  
I fain would be. And if that wish be vain,  
Send me, ye maids, my truant back again,  
Nor in his flattering promises believe :  
As me before, so you he will deceive.  
And thou, dear Venus, help me, who dost dwell  
Within thy shrine on Eryx’ citadel.

Does Fortune always in one tenor go  
That I have nothing but continual woe ?  
Scarce six years old was I, when for my sire,  
Untimely slain, my tears bedewed the pyre.  
A wanton on my brother fixed her hold ;  
She stole his honour and she took his gold ;  
And now he sails the sea, and what he lost  
Seeks to regain at endless labour’s cost,  
While as for me, who warned him ’gainst the jade  
My loving loyalty with hate is paid.  
Naught do I see, save trouble and annoy :  
Even my daughter gives more pain than joy ;  
All winds alike to my barque are unkind,  
And now in you my bitterest grief I find.

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

Look how my hair unkempt about me clings,  
Look at my fingers shorn of all their rings !  
Mean is my dress, no gold adorns my head,  
No balm of Araby is on it spread.

For why spend time on vanities like these  
When he's away whom only I would please ?  
My heart is one that lightest causes move,  
Continual reason for continual love.  
Either the fates so ruled my natal star,  
And in my loom of life no stiff threads are :  
Or else our minds are shaped by what we do  
And amorous verse has made me amorous too.

What wonder then if Phaön's youthful cheek,  
Fit for a virile passion, I should seek.  
I feared Aurora, lest in Cephalus' place  
She might in him a second prey enlace.  
Had Luna, who sees all, my Phaön spied,  
For ever would he sleep by Luna's side.  
And Venus would have carried him away  
Had she not feared that Mars with him would  
play.

## *LETTERS FROM THE "HEROINES"*

No longer boy, not yet a man, each year  
Makes you more comely and more stout appear.  
Come back, fair youth, and my embraces prove.  
Love not yourself, but suffer me to love.

. Lo, as I write my tears fall down like rain.  
Behold these blots, of grief a token plain.  
Ah, me ! If you had mind from me to fly  
You might at least have said one last 'Good-bye'.  
No tears of mine, no kisses did you take.  
I never dreamed that you would me forsake.  
You left me nothing, save my misery :  
No token claimed to remind yourself of me.  
You did not wait my messages : and yet,  
What message could I give save—'Don't forget'.  
O by our love—long may it last !—I swear  
And by the Muses, once my chiefest care,  
When some one said :—' Your joy from you has  
flown '  
I scarce could call my eyes or tongue my own.  
Tears failed the one, and words the other left ;  
My breast was frozen, of all life bereft.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

But when my grief at last had found its way  
I felt no shame my anguish to display  
With hair dishevelled and with beaten breast,  
As when a mother lays her son to rest  
Upon the funeral pyre. My brother jeers  
At my laments and taunts me with my tears,  
And fain some scandal from my grief to spread,  
'Why weep.' he cries, 'Your daughter is not dead.'  
But love and modesty do not agree.  
I rend my robes nor care that all should see.

You, Phaon, are my care : of you I dream  
In visions that more fair than daylight seem.  
In the brief hours of sleep upon my bed  
I hold the lover who from me has fled,  
And fancy that your arms around me twine  
Or that you rest your darling head on mine.  
Warm kisses on my burning lips I feel,  
The kisses you would snatch and I would steal,  
While in soft murmurs I confession make  
Of love, and with my lips am still awake.  
The rest I blush to tell—but love's delight  
In fullest measure comes to me each night.

## *LETTERS FROM THE "HEROINES"*

Alas, too soon the sun brings day again.  
My dreams are scattered, and I loud complain.  
Out to the woods for solace then I fly,  
Accomplices in past felicity ;  
And there like one distraught beneath the trees  
Run to and fro, my hair loose in the breeze.  
I see our grotto with its hanging stone  
That seemed like marble in the days bygone.  
I feel the turf where we our bodies laid,  
For in the grass a hollow there we made.  
I touch the ground where still your trace  
appears,  
The ground that now is moistened by my tears.  
I roam the wood which on its verdant sward  
A leafy couch to us did oft afford.  
But him who was the forest's richest dower,  
Its lord and mine, to see I have no power.  
The trees are leafless, all their branches bare :  
No song of birds delights the silent air.  
Only sad Procrite for her Itys weeps  
And still the memory of her vengeance keeps.  
She weeps her Itys, I my loneliness :  
A midnight silence on all else doth press.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

There is a sacred fountain crystal clear—  
Some god within it dwells whom men revere—  
A water lotus spreads its branches wide  
And verdant turf grows fresh on every side.  
Wearied with grief I laid me there to sleep  
When lo, the nymph who does its waters keep  
Appeared and said :—" For unrequited love  
Ambracia will a land of healing prove,  
Where Phoebus from the lofty Actian height  
Holds all the waves of Leucas in his sight.  
Deucalion thence leaped down in days of yore—  
With love for Pyrrha he had suffered sore—  
Nor any hurt received, but straight was cured  
Of the long agony he had endured.  
Such is the power that god has given that wave  
Leap from the cliff, and healing you shall have."

So the nymph counselled me. Roused by my  
fears  
I started up, my eyes all filled with tears.  
Yes, I will go, dear nymph, that cliff to try :  
A love like mine drives forth timidity.

## *LETTERS FROM THE “HEROINES”*

Whatever may betide will bring me ease ;  
Light is my body, bear me up, kind breeze.  
And thou, soft love, thy pinions place beneath,  
Lest to the sea I bring reproach by death.  
Come quick, O day, when I shall happy live,  
And then my lyre to Phoebus I will give,  
Inscribed : “ This offering to the god I bring  
Which shall for Phoebus and for Sappho sing.”

And yet why should I from high Actium fall,  
When you my wandering footsteps could recall,  
A helper stronger than the Leucadian wave,  
As fair as Phoebus and as sure to save ?  
And though you were more fierce than cliff or sea,  
Could you endure the cause of death to be ?  
’Twere better on your bosom to repose  
Than from those deadly rocks to end my woes,  
I whom so often you were wont to praise,  
To whom so oft you gave the poet’s bays.  
Ah, would I now could play the poet’s part,  
Grief stays my tongue and sorrow dims my art.  
No strength have I to-day to wake my lute.  
My quill is silent and my lyre is mute.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Ye Lesbian maidens, daughters of the sea,  
Already mated or yet brides to be,  
Ye Lesbians, whom I loved to my own shame,  
Cease now the homage of my harp to claim.  
Phaon has swept all that you loved away,  
Ah, me, how near ' my Phaon ' I did say !  
Let him come back ; and then again I'll sing.  
What he has taken he alone can bring.

Do prayers avail to touch that churlish mind,  
Or are my words cast vainly to the wind ?  
Ah, would that wind might bear you back to me,  
For here 'tis fitting, surely, you should be.  
And if indeed you votive gifts essay  
For your return, why vex me with delay ?  
Weigh anchor, and the breeze will speed you on.  
The sea is Venus' own dominion.  
Cupid himself beside the helm will stand  
And spread or furl your sails with his soft hand.  
But if you mean from Sappho still to fly—  
You have no cause nor any reason why—  
Send me a letter, that my fate I know ;  
And from Leucadia's rock to death I'll go.

## EPISODES FROM THE *FASTI*

THE *Fasti*, in six books of elegiac verse, is a gallant attempt to extract material for poetry from the barren ore of the Roman Calendar. It was apparently meant originally to be in twelve books, one for each month of the year; but Ovid gave up the attempt half-way. A comparison with the *Metamorphoses* will show how much more suited to imaginative treatment were the figures of Greek Legend than anything which Rome could produce.



*EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

The months sped by and on a summer day  
When from the hunt Diana was returning.  
Through a dark ilex grove she made her way—  
The noontide sun in heaven hotly burning—  
And said, espying there a secret pool :  
“ Come let us bathe within this fountain cool.”

The nymphs straightway put off their tunics white  
Obedient to her word, and no one tarried.  
Only Callisto lingered in affright,  
Too conscious of the burden that she carried.  
‘ Dear maiden,’ cried her queen, ‘ be not afraid.’  
And knew not that she was no more a maid.

Callisto blushed as thus she heard her calling.  
But now no longer could she keep concealed  
The fruit of love, for lo, her tunic falling,  
The swelling contour of her form revealed.  
‘ Go, perjured wretch’—the angry goddess cried ;  
‘ Nor stain with thy foul body this pure tide.’

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

So was she banished by the huntress queen,  
And, ere ten circling moons had waxed and  
waned,  
The virgin as a mother now was seen  
And Juno's fury fell on her unchained.  
That Jove had done the sin she had no care ;  
The maid she changed into a grizzly bear.

Upon the hills for food she went a-questing,  
She who had been the great god's paramour ;  
While Juno mocked her lord with angry jesting :  
“ See you your darling's visage at this hour ?  
Behold the wanton that you once caressed :  
Go, let her hug you to her hairy breast.”

So passed the seasons and upon one morning,  
When fifteen years had gone since he was born,  
Callisto's son, a huntsman danger scorning,  
Saw her dark shape and chased the beast  
forlorn.

*EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

She stopped, and knew her child, and stood  
distraught,  
To think that all her days were come to  
naught.

Out came his spear and she would have been  
slain

By her own son, had Jove not had regard.  
By him as stars to heaven both were ta'cn,  
And there they shine, the Bear and the Bear  
Ward.  
But Juno still is wroth, nor will allow  
The Bear to dip in Ocean even now.

*Fasti*, II, 155-182.

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **THE WOOD-GOD'S MISADVENTURE**

*If Ovid does not know the real reason for an ancient custom he is quite capable of inventing one. This aetiological fable, purporting to account for the nude ritual of the Luperci, is probably due to his own imagination.*

WHY merry Faunus shrinks from all concealing  
Of limbs, and bids his worshippers to go  
Unclad in dance, their naked forms revealing,  
Is due to things that happened long ago,  
But to a sense of humour still appealing.

The tale is rather *risqué*, you must know ;  
Still, if you like a joke that's somewhat hoary  
Gather around and listen to my story.

It chanced one day the god in silent wonder  
From his high hill espied a comely pair  
Bedecked in all the pride of eastern plunder,  
Hercules the strong and Omphalé the fair.

**EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"**

A gold embroidered robe draped around her,  
Upon her shoulders fell her scented hair,  
And as the day was warm and he much married  
Her gilded parasol Alcides carried.

Old Faunus gazed and burned with sudden  
rapture.

"No more of rustic nymphs for me"—he  
cries.

"This damsel for myself this night I'll capture  
When in the Bacchic grove she sleeping lies.  
Beneath yon cave, when slumber fast has  
wrapped her,

Beside the purling brook she'll be my prize.  
Soon will the evening dews on Tmolus fall  
And night's dark steeds obey fair Hesper's call."

Meanwhile the queen, as slaves the feast were  
making,

Arrayed the hero in a woman's dress.

Her bright-dyed shift as garment for him taking  
With holes wherfrom his arms might find  
egress,

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

And for his waist the supple corset breaking

That did her body's slender grace confess.

Nor cared she if her sandals scarce would fit  
Or that his stalwart hands her bracelets split.

Herself she takes his club and well-filled quiver

And girds about her breast the lion's skin,

And when their meal is done they both deliver  
Themselves to sleep nor think of carnal sin.

For on that eve they'd bathed within the river

Ere to their separate beds they entered in.

The reason ? They had both a vow to pay  
To kindly Bacchus at the break of day.

'Twas twelve o'clock, when Faunus to the grotto

Came creeping stealthy through the shades of  
night.

Love made him bold : 'Paudace' he took for  
motto

And when he saw about him left and right

Men sunk in drunken ease, he murmured, *sotto*

*Voce*—“This is indeed a pleasing sight.

“Till daybreak all this crew will quiet keep.

“I hope their mistress is as sound asleep.”

*EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

So in he goes to where the dame was lying  
Whom he was fain to have at his command,  
This daring wooer, and around him spying  
With arm outstretched sought for the  
promised land,  
And might have happy been at the first trying  
For on her very bed he put his hand.  
But when he touched the lion's shaggy hide  
He shrank in craven fear and left her side.

E'en as a traveller trembles at the danger  
Of viper's lifted fang and moves away,  
So did that skin affright our wanton ranger.  
And going where the other sleeper lay,  
Still to their change of raiment quite a stranger,  
He tried again and thought he held his prey.  
For now it is a woman's shift at length,  
And in himself he feels a giant's strength.

He mounts upon the bed and in prelusion  
To his intent pulls at the lady's gown  
And finds concealed within it—oh confusion !  
A leg with hairy bristles overgrown ;

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

And when with his researches still he goes on  
By a shrewd kick he to the ground is thrown.  
'Help'—cries the queen awakened by the din  
And at her call the servants rush within.

The torches' light reveals the god's undoing  
And show him lying on the ground in pain.  
'Twas Hercules in truth he was pursuing  
And now he knows love's labour was in vain.  
The queen makes merry mock of his poor  
wooing  
And all the servants join in the refrain.  
Faunus alone was sad. And that is why  
To-day he hates all wraps and secrecy.

*Fasti*, II, 305-358.

## *EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

### ROMULUS AND REMUS

*Ovid in the Fasti returns several times to the legend of Romulus, his escape from death by drowning, his quarrel with his brother, and the device whereby he gained the Sabine maidens as wives for his men. The story of the wolf, here told, was one of Rome's most cherished fables.*

WHAT time her uncle over Rome did reign  
The Vestal Silvia brought forth children twain.  
'Drown them' :—the king gave forth his stern  
decree,  
Nor cared that one of them should Romulus be.  
His servants weep, as they his word obey,  
And the poor infants on the water lay,  
Where Albula, whom now we Tiber call,  
Ran swift in flood : over our Market Hall  
Boats then were gliding, and our Circus grand  
Had more of water in it than of land.  
That they should further go the stream forbade,  
And thus the one or other of them said :—

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

“ How like they are and both how passing fair !  
Yet this one seems the stronger of the pair.  
If in men’s face their lineage you see,  
Some god methinks these children’s sire must  
be.

And yet, if ’twere a god that sowed the seed,  
He sure would help them in their hour of need ;  
E’en though their mother wanted not his aid  
Who on this self-same day is childless made.  
Poor hapless babes, together were you born ;  
Together must you die this grievous morn.”  
So they lamented and upon the ground  
The infants placed. Their wailing echoed  
round.

You’d think they knew, so piteous were their  
cries.

The messengers returned with streaming eyes.

So in their cradle o’er the waters dark,  
Bearing the fate of Rome in their frail barque,  
The children floated, till the ebbing tide  
Left them safe stranded by the forest side,

## *EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

Where now the Ruminal Fig-tree we behold,  
Called Tree of Romulus by the men of old.  
And then—oh wonder—to the babes forlorn  
There came a she-wolf who twin cubs had borne,  
And far from hurting them in their distress  
Gave help and succour to their helplessness.  
Those whom a she-wolf tends, shame on such  
sin,  
Were sent to death by their own mother's kin !  
With coaxing tongue above the babes she stands  
And lets then touch her tail with tiny hands.  
They feel no fear, children of Mars confessed,  
And drain the wolf-cubs' nurture from her  
breast.

*Fasti*, II, 383-420.

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **THE RAPE OF LUCRECE**

*One night, during the siege of Ardea, a party of Roman nobles returned to visit their wives and see how they were spending their time in their husbands' absence. Enflamed by the beauty of the chaste Lucretia, wife of Collatinus, Sextus Tarquinius determines to take her for his own.*

MEANWHILE the prince with love is all on fire,  
Slave to a passion that he yet must hide ;  
Her native beauty fans his fierce desire,  
Her grace, her golden locks, her milk-white side,  
Her voice, the tender words that she replied ;  
And though he knows he cannot tempt to sin,  
The less he hopes, the more he longs to win.

Cockcrow had gone before the lords return.  
And now Lucretia is far away ;  
But still with thoughts of her his senses burn  
And round her image all his fancies play :  
So did she sit, he thinks, so yesterday  
She spun her wool, thus were her ringlets drest  
And thus unbound upon her neck did rest.

*EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

With prayers and threats and promises he plied  
her ;

But prayers and threats and promises were vain,  
Until he vowed that he would lay beside her  
Some groom whom he in her embrace had ta'en  
And in just wrath the guilty varlet slain.  
Then honour made her to dishonour yield  
And filthy lust deflowered that stainless field.

Triumphant he rejoices o'er his prey,  
His thoughts by fiery passion tempest tossed.  
He knows not that his power has passed away  
Nor what that night's enjoyment shall him cost,  
His kingdom shattered, his dominion lost.  
Proud Tarquin, soon thy throne shall be cast  
down  
And thou with all thy lineage overthrown.

So the day dawned. She sits with hair flung  
wild  
Like some sad mother mourning by the pyre  
Where burns the body of her only child ;  
Then calls her husband and her aged sire,

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Swift from the camp they come at her desire,  
And see her plight and fain the cause would  
know,  
—‘Who, pray, is dead? Whose hand has  
struck this blow?’

For long she speaks no word and veils her cheek  
All red with blushes in her matron’s gown,  
The while her husband and her father seek  
To staunch the tears that like a stream run  
down,

Hiding the fear that has within them grown.  
Thrice would she speak; and thrice in vain she  
tries

Until at last with downcast face she cries—

‘Shall Tarquin make me dumb as well as  
shamed?

Shall I to him this second insult owe?  
By my own lips my sin shall be proclaimed.  
What care I now although the whole world  
know

The story of my loss and cruel woe?’

## *EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

Then what she can she tells : her tears reveal  
The rest that modesty would still conceal.

Her sire and husband hear the grievous  
tale

And—‘ Lo, we freely pardon ’ ;—to her cry,  
‘ Against such force no woman could prevail.’  
But to their words she sadly made reply—  
‘ The grace you grant I to myself deny.’

Then with a hidden knife she pierced her  
breast

And at her father’s feet sank down to rest.

*Fasti, II, 761-832.*

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **IN PRAISE OF MINERVA**

*The feast of Minerva, which became in the middle ages St Gregory's Day, took place on five days in March beginning the 19th. It was held as a holiday in the schools, and ushers expected then a present from their pupils.*

COME now, ye lads and lasses all,  
And sing Minerva's praise.  
For those who on Minerva call  
With hymns and tuneful lays  
In every art will dexterous be  
And trained in all housewifery.

From her, ye maidens, learn to fill  
The distaff with soft wool,  
The shuttle use and loom with skill,  
And close your weaving pull,  
To cleanse your spotted robes from stain  
And dye them in the vat again.

*EPISODES FROM THE “FASTI”*

No cobbler can make a shoe  
Unless Minerva aid.  
Doctors and humble ushers too  
Give to the virgin maid  
Share of your fees and she will bring  
New pupils for your offering.

The painter’s and the sculptor’s art,  
The astronomer’s belong  
To her : in each she has a part  
And most of all in song.  
If I have earned her help, I pray  
She guide me still upon my way.

*Fasti*, III, 815-834.

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **IN PRAISE OF VENUS**

*This is a companion piece to the preceding. It is inspired to some extent by the magnificent opening of Lucretius' poem, and has its parallel in the passage on the birth of love from the Ars Amatoria given in this volume, but the phrasing is Ovid's own and in his most felicitous style.*

VENUS is queen : to her is given  
Power over land and sea and heaven.  
To her the gods their lineage owe  
And we all things on earth that grow.  
'Twas she who peopled wood and grove.  
'Twas she who taught the world to love.

Ram against ram his horn will press,  
Yet woo the sheep with soft caress ;  
The bull, whom all the forest fears,  
Complacent to his cows appears ;  
And e'en the fish beneath the sea  
Acknowledge Venus' mastery.

## *EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

Venus is queen : she did remove  
Men's savage ways and gave them love.  
A thousand arts from her derive ;  
For when to please a maid men strive  
They have to show a craftsman's skill  
If they would mould her to their will.

A lover first, his suit refused,  
The power of plaintive music used.  
A lover first on some stern maid  
The pleader's cunning art essayed.  
It is with Venus songs commence,  
And Venus lends us eloquence.

*Fasti*, IV, 91-113.

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **THE STORY OF CLAUDIA**

*In 205 B.C., towards the end of the Hannibalian War, the priests at Rome produced a sibylline oracle which ordered that the goddess Cybele should be brought from Phrygia to Rome. The ship conveying the sacred image ran aground on a shoal in the Tiber, but was induced to move again in the miraculous fashion here described.*

FROM Clausus Claudia Quinta drew her race,  
Noble alike in lineage and in face,  
A virgin chaste though scandal, civil-tongued,  
Imputed sins that ne'er to her belonged.  
Her robes and coiffure were her real offence  
And for her elders lack of reverence.  
She smiled at these base rumours, for she knew  
Her virtue : so abroad the rumours flew.

“

Upon that day from out the matron band  
She came, and in the water dipped her hand,

## *EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

And sprinkled thrice her head, and thrice in  
prayer

Lifted her palms wide open to the air.

The crowd look on in wonder, and suppose

A sudden madness when on knees she goes

And gazing at the image by the prow

With locks dishevelled makes this solemn vow :—

' O fruitful mother, on me pity take  
And grant the prayer which I your suppliant  
make.

Men say I am not chaste : do you decide :

Condemn : in death your verdict I'll abide.

But if you find no fault my witness be,

And drawn by my chaste fingers follow me.'

So did she speak, and swift the hawser drew—

O wonder in our theatre proven true !—

The goddess moved : her verdict sure was  
given,

And shouts of gladness risc aloft to heaven.

*Fasti*, IV, 305-328.

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **PROSERPINA AT HENNA**

*Proserpina, daughter of Ceres, while gathering flowers at Henna in Sicily, was carried off by Pluto, the brother of her father Jove, and became the queen of the neither world. The old romantic story is a favourite theme for Greek, and even more for Roman, poets.*

NEAR Henna lies a valley deep in shade  
Where streams that fall from the high cliffs  
above  
Bedew the ground with moisture. Here the  
Maid  
Attended by her comrades loved to rove,  
And on that day she came with feet unshod  
And wandering o'er the mead the verdure trod.  
  
With all the hues that nature's palette knows  
The grass shone bright, in blue and yellow  
pied,  
Fragrant with every bloom that wilding grows :  
Which when fair Proserpine beheld she  
cried :—

## *EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

"Come, maidens dear, let's use these shining hours  
And carry home our fill of these gay flowers."

Violets and cassia and flowering clover  
And hyacinths and amaranth they pull,  
And the red flame of marigold discover,  
And in soft hands green thyme and poppies pull,  
And flowers that have no name : their leader  
chooses  
Lilies and slender saffron and red roses.

Their girlish hearts delight in the vain spoil,  
While in the busy contest no one feels  
The labour of the task nor counts it toil,  
Some gather reeds and plait them into weels  
To take the fragile blooms, some keep them  
pressed  
In their loose-folded gowns or on their breast.  
So eager are the maids new flowers to find  
That soon they scatter wandering far away  
And fair Proserpina is left behind,  
No comrade with her, ah, unhappy day !

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Dark Pluto sees her and from mortal sight  
Bears off his prize upon the steeds of night.

“ Help me, O dearest mother, help,”—she calls,  
And in her anguish tears her fine spun dress.  
But the god takes her to his nether halls  
Nor heeds her tears and sobs of dire distress.  
Goadings to headlong haste his sable team  
Themselves impatient of the sun’s bright beam.

“ Behold thy bounteous gifts,”—her comrades  
cry  
Laden with booty ; but their Proserpine  
Is far away nor can to them reply  
Nor of her place of prison give a sign.  
Then with their hands they beat their breasts  
unbound  
And to their wailing all the hills resound.

*Fasti*, IV, 425-454.

## *EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

### FLORA AND THE BIRTH OF MARS

*Flora was essentially a Roman goddess, and her festival was made the occasion of much licentious revelry. Ovid here ingeniously identifies her with a more or less imaginary Greek nymph Chloris, and brings her into connection with the curious legend that attributed virgin birth to the god of war.*

A GRECIAN nymph was I, Chloris my name—  
Change but some letters, it becomes the same  
As Flora, mark you—and among the Good  
Within the Happy Fields was my abode.  
How fair I was it scarce beseems to tell :  
But to a god I seemed desirable.  
For as I roamed abroad one April day  
The West Wind saw me, and, though I said nay,  
Took me by force, as Boreas before  
Took Orithyia on the Attic shore.  
Still, for that wrong by wedlock he atoned  
Nor have I cause to grieve, as consort owned.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Eternal spring is mine, trees ever green  
Earth clothed in herbage, azure skies serene ;  
And as my bridal gift and marriage dower  
He gave me governance of every flower.  
I have a garden where soft breezes blow  
And purling streams amid the verdure flow.  
Oft have I tried to count the colours there  
And oft the task abandoned in despair.  
On dewy morns, before the day's begun,  
When the gay blooms stand sparkling in the sun,  
The Hours come to me in their bright array  
And these my gifts within their baskets lay,  
While from the beds the Graces blossoms take  
That shall for gods on high a garland make.  
'Twas I who scattered flowerlets far and wide  
And left the sombre earth with colour pied.  
'Twas I who wrote young Hyacinthus' name  
Upon the leaves that still record his fame.  
It is to me Narcissus' glory's due :  
Unhappy wight, that he could not be two !  
Crocus and Attis and fair Myrrha's son  
Owe their repute to me and me alone ;

## *EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

And through my aid great Mars, the god of strife  
—Tell not to Jove this story!—came to life  
Queen Juno, when Minerva first was born  
Without her intervention, went forlorn  
To tell old Ocean of her husband's spite  
And on her way knocked at my door one night.  
I asked—‘What brings you, Queen, to my poor  
home?’  
And she explained the reason she had come.  
But when to comfort her distress I tried—  
‘Words cannot heal this cruel wrong’—she  
cried.—  
‘If Jove can mother both and father be  
And offspring have without regard to me,  
Why should I not as well bring forth a child  
Untouched of males, a virgin undefiled?  
I will essay each herb, each magic spell,  
In earth and ocean and the depths of hell.’  
E'en as she spoke she saw me hesitate  
And said ‘Metlinks that in your flowery state  
Some potent herb has power to give me aid?’  
Thrice I began to promise; thrice I stayed

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

In fear of Jove's revenge 'Help, I beseech,'  
She cried; 'no word of this to heaven shall  
reach,  
I swear it by the waves of Styx divine.'  
Then I replied—'A mystic flower is mine  
Sent me of yore from the Olenian fields  
Which every year one only blossom yields.  
The giver told me that if I should take  
A barren cow one touch of this would make  
Her pregnant straightway. So I tried the test,  
And soon a calf beside that cow did rest.'  
This then I said, and plucked the lingering  
flower  
And touched her with it. Straight its magic  
power  
Begat a child upon her, and she sped,  
Her wish achieved, to Thrace, where, brought  
to bed,  
Of Mars she was delivered by the side  
Of northern Hellespont and Pontus tide.

*Fasti*, V, 195-258.

## *EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

### CARNA AND JANUS

*To lovers of words the derivations that Ovid is constantly offering in the Fasti are a source of pure delight. The old Roman goddess Carna had probably the unromantic task of guarding the household's meat ; but Ovid prefers either of two more subtle explanations, which would connect her with fountains or with door-hinges.*

By Tiber's stream there lived a nymph most fair  
Whom many a suitor sought to make his bride.  
To hunt the flying stag her chiefest care  
And with her nets to roam the country-side.  
Men thought in her Diana's self to see ;  
And e'en Diana could not lovelier be.

Cunning she was. If any lover came  
And begged caresses, thus would she reply :—  
“ There is no shelter here to hide my shame :  
In yonder grotto now, were no one nigh,  
Perhaps I might.” So to the cave he'd run,  
And when he turned find that the maid had  
gone.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

So did she trick them all for many a while  
Till Janus came and took her for his own.  
First with soft words he tried her to beguile,  
And when, as was her wont, the cave was  
shown,  
Hastened in front. She lingered in the rear  
And slipped for refuge to a thicket near.

But ah, she did not know that Janus sees  
All that is done before him and behind !  
E'en as she hid within the sheltering trees  
He hurried back the unwary nymph to find,  
And took her in his arms, and held her fast,  
Until he had his will of her at last.

Then, triumph won : " Dear nymph, for this  
caress,"  
He cried, " since thou hast deigned with me  
to lie,  
Power over every hinge thou shalt possess  
As guerdon for thy lost virginity."

He spake and gave to her the white thorn spray  
Which keeps all troubles from our doors away.

*Fasti*, VI, 107-130.

## *EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

### **THE WICKED DAUGHTER**

*In the early history of Rome the most striking figures are the immigrant Tarquins. The founder of the family obtained the kingship and was succeeded by Servius Tullius, whose two daughters married Tarquin's two sons. The wicked Tullia, whose husband was of a mild disposition, proposed to Tarquin the Proud that they should murder their respective partners and marry one another: which they did.*

WHEN 'Tullia had the marriage won  
Which was for her the price of sin  
She ever drove her husband on  
And with fell promptings would begin :—  
‘ Of what avail those deaths,’ she would cry,  
‘ If we live saintly, you and I ?

‘ My sister might as well have lived,  
‘ Your brother need not have been slain.  
‘ Our partners both might have survived,  
‘ If we in idle ease remain.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

‘ My father’s life, my father’s throne  
‘ I give you. Take them for your own.  
  
‘ That is the dowry which I brought.  
‘ Come, be a man and claim your right.  
‘ By force dominion must be sought  
‘ And crime is appanage of might.  
‘ Go, slay my sire. I’ll call it good ;  
‘ And dip my hands in his red blood.’

Thus did she goad him, till at last  
He sat him in the old king’s seat.  
War, tumult, murder, follow fast  
And massacres in every street.  
Tarquin as victor holds the field  
And Servius to force must yield.

Yea, he must yield and give his life.  
By his own palace he was found  
All bloody from the furious strife :  
And as he lay upon the ground  
His daughter in her carriage fine  
Came riding to the Esquiline.

*EPISODES FROM THE "FASTI"*

Her driver saw the corpse and stayed  
His wheels in pity for the dead,  
But on him fierce rebuke she laid :—  
‘Drive on,’ she cried, ‘across his head :  
‘Drive on, I say, and have no fear :  
‘Your kindness else will cost you dear.’

And so upon her father’s face  
She trampled in her deadly pride.  
O shameful sin, O dire disgrace,  
Eternal brand of parricide !  
All know it yet, for till this day  
That road is called ‘The Murderer’s Way.’

*Fasti, VI, 587-610.*



## STORIES FROM THE *METAMORPHOSES*

THE *Metamorphoses*, in fifteen books of hexameters, is one of the longest Latin poems, and, after Homer and the *Arabian Nights*, the richest treasure house of stories in world literature. Starting with the evolution of earth from chaos it ends with the apotheosis of Julius Cæsar, and in itself forms the most attractive compendium of Greek mythology that we possess.



## Apollo and Daphne

*A*POLLO, fresh from slaying the Python with his arrows, mocks at his brother Cupid's puny bow. The little god in revenge fires him with love for Daphne, daughter of the river god Peneus, who rejects his suit, and is by her father changed into a laurel.

THEN from his quiver Cupid took two darts :  
One kindles love, one hate in mortal hearts.  
The first, sharp-pointed, with a golden head,  
The other dull, and blunt, and tipped with lead.  
With this he Daphne smote, and then he drew  
The golden shaft and pierced Apollo through,  
Who straightway burned with passion, while the maid

Was of the very name of love afraid.  
Within the woods she dwelt, and in her toils  
Caught the wild deer, rejoicing in their spoils,  
Like chaste Diana with her hair unbound,  
Her home the forest brake, her bed the ground.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Full many a lover sought her for his bride ;  
But all she drove unheeded from her side,  
Impatient of a man, nor cared to know  
The joys that Hymen and young Love allow.  
Oft would her father say : ‘ A husband take—  
· It is your due—and me a grandsire make.’  
But still she shrank from wedlock as a thing  
Of evil concupiscence and would fling  
Her arms about him and with burning face  
In coaxing guise would ask him thus for gracc :—  
‘ As Jove Diana, so permit thou me  
To live unwedded and a virgin be.’

But though her father yielded to her prayer,  
Her own soft body and her visage fair  
Forbade what she desired. On a day  
Apollo saw the maiden, and straightway  
Longed to possess her ; and too soon believed  
Possession certain, by himself deceived.  
As burns the stubble in a corn field dry ;  
As hedges blaze, when travellers passing by

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

More would he say ; but lo, the timid maid  
Fled from his side and left the words unsaid  
Yet even then she seemed surpassing fair  
As the soft breeze show'd all her body bare,  
With garments fluttering in the wanton wind.  
Her hair unbound and streaming loose behind.  
" No more," he cries, " of loving words I'll  
waste."

Flight spurs desire. He follows hot in haste ;  
E'en as a greyhound, when a hare's in sight,  
Seeks out his prey, while she in headlong flight  
Herself seeks safety, and can scarcely know  
Whether she be already caught or no ;  
So close the muzzle to her flying heels,  
So near the fangs that closing round she feels.

Thus ran the god and maid, she sped by fear  
And he by hope, on love's wings drawing near,  
Nor gave her time for rest, but with hot  
breath .

Fanned her loose hair and her white neck  
beneath.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

At last her strength was spent, and loud she  
cried,

O'ercome with terror, to her father's tide :—  
“ Help me, dear father, by thy power divine,  
And change the fateful beauty that is mine.”  
Scarce had she spoken when a torpor fell  
Upon her limbs ; a thin and bark-like shell  
Begirt her bosom ; where her hair had been  
Sprang forth a maze of boughs and foliage green.  
Her face, so fair, took on a leafy dress ;  
Her flying feet the clinging tree roots press ;  
All, all is changed, except her loveliness.

*Metam.*, I, 468-552.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

### PAN AND SYRINX

*Goat-footed Pan, falling enamoured of Syrinx, pursued the reluctant nymph, who, unable to escape from him, in distress called on her river sisters for aid, and was thereupon by them changed into a tuft of reeds. The story is told briefly by Ovid in the Metamorphoses in his most lively and vivid manner, but, curiously enough, it is made there to serve the purpose of a soporific. Mercury, sent by his father Jove to slay the hundred-eyed Argus and deliver Io from the bondage laid upon her by wrathful Juno, succeeds with this tale in putting the watchful herdsman to sleep, and then kills him.*

THEN spake the god:—“On Arcady’s cool heights  
Among the nymphs whom Nonacris delights  
One naiad was there, Syrinx called by name,  
Fairest of all and most renowned in fame.  
Oft would she fly the satyrs, when they wooed  
here,  
And gods of wood and field who swift pursued  
her;

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

For she a virgin was, of Dian's hand,  
And girt in Dian's fashion well might stand  
For Dian's self, save that her bow was made  
Of horn, a bow of gold her queen arrayed :  
And even thus she was so passing fair  
That it was hard to choose between the pair.

One day, as from Lycaeus she came down,  
Pan garlanded with spiky pine cone crown  
Beheld her and began to woo the maid"—  
Here the god stopped nor then to Argus said  
How the fair virgin spurned the rustic god,  
And flying o'er the wastes by men untrod  
Came to the bank where Ladon's waters gleam  
And saw her way barred by the sandy stream.  
How then she begged the nymphs to change her  
form,  
And Pan, who thought to clasp a bosom warm,  
Found but a tuft of reeds which to his sighs  
Touched by the wind with plaintive note  
replies.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

Nor told he how charmed by the music sweet  
Pan cried :—“ In union here at least we meet.”  
And so the pipes unequal, made of reed,  
And joined with wax, took then in very deed  
The maiden’s name, and “ *syrinx* ” still are  
called—

All this he said not ; for by sleep enthralled  
He saw those Argus eyes fast closed at length,  
And took his wand, and with its magic strength  
Deepened their slumber, and while fast he slept,  
His curved falchion from its sheath he swept,  
And smote between the neck and nodding head.  
Forth gushed the blood and Argus falls down  
dead,  
Staining the rocks with gore : his hundred eyes  
Can see no more, and sightless there he lies.

*Metam.*, I, 689-721.

## THE MIRROR OF VENUS

### JUPITER AND CALLISTO

*In no legend does the amoral character of the old Greek mythology appear more clearly than in the tale of Jupiter and Callisto. After the great conflagration that follows Phaethon's rash attempt to drive the chariot of the sun, the father of the gods descends to earth to repair the destruction that the fire has caused. He sees there a virgin nymph Callisto, himself assumes the form of her patron goddess Diana, and in this disguise takes advantage of her innocence. She bears a child, but is left by the god to be shamefully expelled from Diana's company, and then by the jealousy of Juno transformed into a she-bear. Only when her son, grown to manhood, is about to kill his own mother in her beast shape does Jupiter intervene and change them both into stars. The story is told by Ovid with his usual light gaiety; but in itself it is far from being humorous, and is a typical example of those fables that seemed to Plato so objectionable.*

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

AND now great Jove surveys his walls on high,  
If that the fire had marred their symmetry.  
But his firm citadel untarnished stands,  
And straight he turns his eyes to mortal lands.  
First for Arcadia, his chiefest care,  
He wakes afresh the streams that scarcely dare  
As yet to flow and bids new grass grow green  
And verdant forests deck the ravaged scene.  
In eager haste he hurries to and fro  
Intent upon his kindly task, when lo  
He sees a virgin in the Arcadian glade  
And burns with sudden passion for the maid.  
She was in truth a nymph most wondrous fair ;  
No need had she with art to tire her hair  
Or spin soft wool to make her raiment fine ;  
Her flowing locks one fillet did entwine,  
One clasp her tunic fastened when with bow  
Or spear in hand she to the chase would go.  
Of all the maids on the Maenalian height  
None was more pleasing in Diana's sight,  
None had more title to the goddess' love,  
Ah, that such favours ever fleeting prove !

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

'Twas midnoon past : the sun in heaven stood  
As the nymph came into the virgin wood.  
She doffed her arrows, her stout bow unstrung  
And on the grassy sward her body flung  
Then of her quiver there a pillow made  
And wearied slept, alone, yet unafraid.  
The god beheld her, as at ease she lay,  
And cried, intent at once on amorous play :—  
' My wife of my deceit will never know.  
But even if she sees me here below  
And in her jealous spite begins to bawl,  
I shall not care : the wench is worth it all.'

At once he takes the visage and the ways  
Of chaste Diana and approaching says :  
' Dear nymph, the best beloved of all my train,  
Where hast to-day been hunting ? I am fain  
To hear of all thy doings.' ' Mistress mine,'  
Replied the maid, ' I greet thee, queen divine,  
Who art to me more mighty e'en than Jove ;  
I say it, though he hear me there above.'

**STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"**

THEN did great Jove call Mercury to his side,  
And, fain his amorous purpose still to hide,  
Said to him : " Son, my dear confederate,  
Who on my bidding ever loves to wait,  
Go now, and quickly, in your wonted flight  
And seek the land that Maia holds in sight  
Upon the leftward hand : 'tis Sidon named  
By those who dwell within its borders famed.  
There you will see along the grassy hill,  
The royal cattle, grazing, each his fill.  
It is my wish that they should driven be,  
Down from their mountain pastures to the sea."

So spake the god ; and soon at his command  
He saw the cattle heading to the sand  
Along the margin of a sheltered bay,  
Where the king's daughter oft was wont to play  
With her dear Syrian maids. He knew full well  
That love and dignity can never dwell  
For long together or at ease agree ;  
And so he laid aside his majesty,

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

And ceased to be great heaven's almighty god,  
Who makes the world to tremble at his nod,  
With three-forked lightning and with sceptre  
dread,

But turned himself into a bull instead.

Thus to the royal kine he did repair,  
And with them lowed and cropped the grass,  
most fair

Of all the herd , his skin as white as snow  
Untrodden and unmelted, ere it flow  
Beneath the rainy south ; his muscles strong  
Upon a rounded neck ; his dewlap long ;  
His horns, though small, in shape most perfect  
grown

And more transparent than a topaz stone.  
Gentle his eyes, not flashing fiercely keen ;  
And on his forehead Peace abode serene.

Agenor's daughter looks with wondering eye  
On the kind beast ; nor dares at first draw nigh  
To touch him, though so placid he appears.  
But soon emboldened she forgets her fears,

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

And gives him flowers to taste. Presaging bliss  
On her white hands he lays a gentle kiss,  
And rapt with pleasure scarcely can endure  
To check his onset and make triumph sure.  
Now he desports upon the grassy plain,  
And now, returning to the shore again,  
He rolls upon the sand and lets her press  
Her hands upon him in a soft caress  
And round his horns fresh rosy garlands cast,  
Until she climbs upon his back at last,  
Unwitting whom she rides. Then from the  
strand  
Slowly the god moves out and leaves the land  
And soon, the shallows past, speeds on his way  
Across deep ocean carrying his prey.  
One hand upon his back, one on his horn  
She rests and trembling from the land is borne ;  
While as she leaves her native shore behind  
Her filmy tunic flutters in the wind.

•      *Metam.*, II, 836-875.

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **DIANA AND ACTAEON**

*Actaeon, grandson of Cadmus, king of Thebes, while wandering in the woods unwittingly discovered Diana at the bath. The goddess in cruel revenge turned the youth into a stag, and in that shape he was torn to pieces by his own hounds.*

A VALE Gargaphie lay within that land  
Thick set with pines and dark with cypress  
wood.

And in its depths, not made by craftsman's hand,  
But due to Nature's art, a grotto stood,  
For from the living rock and porous stone  
She had carved out its arches all alone.

'Twas Dian's sacred haunt, and on one side  
A bubbling spring sent forth a silver wave  
Which made a pool with grassy banks set wide  
Wherein the goddess loved her limbs to lave  
When she was weary of the sun and heat  
And from the chase was fain to make retreat.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

That day into the grotto she did go,  
And gave her armour-bearer there to hold  
Her hunting-spear, her quiver, and her bow,  
Its string relaxed, fashioned of shining gold.  
One nymph stood helping till she was ungowned,  
Two more her sandals from her feet unbound.

Then Theban Crocale with fingers deft  
Ties in a knot her lady's loosened hair,  
Albeit her own to stream at ease is left ;  
While others in their urns fresh water bear ;  
Psecas, and Khanis, and young Hyalë  
And with them Nephele and Phiale.

But as Diana the cool wave was cleaving  
Actaeon wandered through the unknown  
grove  
With doubtful steps, his wonted labours leaving,  
And came into the cave. The fates above  
Decreed it should be so ; nor did he know  
What thing that grotto to his eyes would show.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Loud shrieked the nymphs when they the  
stranger sighted.

And beating their bare breasts in terror cried  
And thronging round their queen, a band  
affrighted,

Sought from his gaze her nakedness to hide.  
But 'twas in vain : the goddess was too tall  
And head and shoulders stood above them all.

Red as the clouds upon a summer evening,  
Red as the dawn was fair Diana's cheek  
As there she stood, no veils her beauty screening,  
And turning back looked round her shafts to  
seek.

No arrows had she near ; so in their place  
She threw bright drops of water in his face.

And as she cast the vengeful stream upon him  
And saw his visage moistened by the foam  
She turned again and looking sternly on him  
Spoke him these words in presage of his  
doom :—

“ Go—if you can—and say that you have seen  
The naked body of the huntress queen.”

**STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"**

No more she said : the water's touch he felt  
And from his head stag's horns at once did  
grow ;  
His ears grew sharp, his skin a dappled pelt,  
Arms turned to legs, and hands to hoofs  
below ;  
While on his heart a beast-like terror fell  
And swift in flight he bounded down the dell.

In a clear pool he sees his transformed face.  
'Alas' he tries to say ; but no words come.  
A muffled groan of utterance takes the place ;  
And yet his mind remains. Shall he go home  
Or lurk concealed within the forest drear ?  
Shame bars the one way and the other fear.

But as he stands perplexed, he sights the hounds  
And flies before those whom so oft he led.  
With their fierce baying the wide wood resounds,  
And swift the pack upon their master sped  
And tore him limb from limb while all the air  
Rang with his cries of terror and despair.

*Metam.*, III, 155-209.

## THE MIRROR OF VENUS

### SEMELĒ AND JUNO

*Semelē, daughter of Cadmus, beguiled by jealous Juno, prayed her lover Jove to appear before her in his full majesty. Constrained by his oath the god unwillingly consented, and Semelē perished in the overpowering radiance of his divinity. Her unborn child however was taken from her body, and till the due season kept in his father's thigh.* The story is interesting, both in itself and as an explanation of the doubtful position held by Dionysus in the divine hierarchy. The son of a god and goddess, Hephaestus, for example, is indisputably a god ; and so also may be the son of a god and a nymph. But the son of a god and a mortal woman is not a god but a hero ; although in exceptional cases, as with Heracles and Aesculapius, he may be taken into heaven. Dionysus is so far unique that his divine father performed for him some of a mother's functions.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

THAT day queen Juno learned a child on earth  
Of Jove's own seed was coming quick to birth,  
And once again with jealous wrath on fire  
Debated how she might assuage her ire.  
' Reproaches are in vain with Jove,' she cried :—  
' Too oft on him my anger I have tried.  
Against the woman rather will I go ;  
And if in me men mighty Juno know,  
To whom by right is heaven's high command  
With starry sceptre in my strong right hand,  
Sister and wife of Jove,—a sister true  
Though scarce a wife—then yonder wench shall  
rue  
This hour, and to me retribution pay.  
For 'twas not that in secret love she lay  
Or brief her crime : she has surpassed the rest,  
And in her body which my spouse caressed  
There lies a child conceived, a gift to me  
But seldom granted, and she means to be  
By Jove a mother, of her beauty vain  
Which yet shall be her ruin. Ne'er again  
Call me great Saturn's child unless she fall,  
Swift to her doom ; and sent by Jove withal.'

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Therewith she rose, and wrapped in golden cloud  
Went to the place where Semelë abode.  
But first she dimmed the light that from her shone  
And changed herself to seem an ancient crone  
With wrinkled skin, white hair, and feeble walk,  
Bent in each limb, and mumbling in her talk,  
In outward shape the very image she  
Of Semelë's own nurse, old Beroë.

In parley long the hours sped quickly by  
Till to Jove's name they came. Then, with a  
sigh,  
“ I hope,” she said, “ that he indeed is Jove,  
But yet I fear ; for men are cheats in love  
And many a maid, with high flown talk beguiled  
Of gods and such like, finds herself with child.  
Yet be he very Jove, 'tis not enow.  
Let him a proof of his affection show,  
And in such splendour come to your embrace.  
As when he meets his Juno face to face.  
Bid him to don his royal panoply  
And let you see him in full majesty.”

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

Thus did the goddess prompt the guileless maid ;  
And Semelë at Jove's next visit said :—

"Grant me a boon nor ask me now to tell  
What it may be I deem desirable."

"Have what you will," he cried, "all, all is thine :  
Fear not, I swear it by the power divine  
Of Stygian streams ; and e'en the sons of heaven  
May never break that oath when once 'tis given."

Then answered Semelë, through love too kind  
So soon to perish and her death to find  
By his compliance :—"As within her bower  
Your Juno sees you at love's ritual hour,  
So come to me." Fain had he her forestalled ;  
But neither wish nor oath can be recalled.  
In deep distress the god to heaven rose  
And gathers round about him, as he goes,  
The clouds that ever on his frown attend,  
Lightnings, and storms, and those fierce winds  
that send .

On men destruction, and to end the tale  
His thunder and the bolt that ne'er may fail.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Yet, where he can, he lessens his due part  
Of majesty, nor takes that potent dart  
Wherewith he smote upon Typhœus' head  
And hurled him from the sky, but in its stead  
The lighter bolt, which gods 'The Second' call,  
Less wildly blazing and less fierce withal.  
Therein arrayed to Agenor's halls he came  
And his poor lover. But no mortal frame  
The tumult of his advent could survive  
Nor in the glory of his presence live.  
Her bridal gift brought death. The babe  
unborn  
By Jove's own hand was from her body torn  
And sewn within his thigh, where safe it lay  
Till the months passed and came its natal day.

*Metam.*, III, 260-312.

## *STORIES FROM “METAMORPHOSES”*

### NARCISSUS AT THE FOUNTAIN

*The nymph Echo, Jove's confederate, after being punished by Juno with the partial loss of speech, fell in love with the boy Narcissus, and when he scorned her faded away into the voice we know. The retribution that came upon Narcissus is told here and by Lord Bacon:—“It fatally so chanced that Narcissus came to a clear fountain, upon the banks whereof he lay him down to repose him in the heat of the day; and having espied the shadow of his own face in the water was so besotted and ravished with the contemplation and admiration thereof, that he by no means possible could be drawn from beholding his image in this glass; insomuch that by continually gazing thereupon he pined away to nothing, and was at last turned into a flower of his own name, which appears in the beginning of spring, and is sacred to the infernal powers, Pluto, Proserpina and the Furies.”*

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

THERE was a pool with silvery water bright,  
To which no neat herd e'er his cattle drove ;  
No she-goats feeding on the mountain height,  
Nor wandering sheep disturbed the unruffled  
wave.

No bird or beast came near its thirst to fill,  
No falling branches broke the mirror still.

Worn with the chase, Narcissus laid him down  
In the lush grass that grew along the brink,  
Beneath the shadow by cool poplars thrown,  
And stooping o'er the spring prepared to  
drink.

When lo ! another beauty met his gaze  
That did another thirst within him raise.

For as he bent a wonder came to view :  
An imaged face that set his heart on fire ;  
An incorporeal hope, a joy untrue,  
Shadow of substance, phantom of desire.  
Entranced he lies in ecstasy alone  
Like some slim statue carved of Parian stone.

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

Flung down he marvels at those stars, his eyes,  
And at his locks than Bacchus' own more fair ;  
He sees the roses and the ivories  
Of neck and cheek and lips beyond compare.  
Now loves he that which others in him love,  
And on himself his passion fain would prove.

How often did he stoop to kiss the pool  
That mocked his lips ; how often with his arm  
Seek in the depths beneath the surface cool  
To draw towards his lips the shadowed charm.  
He knows not what he sees ; but still he burns,  
And to the fond illusion still returns.

O foolish boy, why seek to clasp in vain  
A fleeting image ! Nowhere wilt thou find  
Thy heart's desire ; nothing will remain  
Shouldst thou endure to leave the pool  
behind.  
'Tis but a shade reflected thou dost see,  
And if thou turnest 'twill return with thee.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Yet naught could draw him from that lonely  
place,

No thought of food, or sleep at eventide.  
Ever he gazed upon the mirrored face  
And with the vision ne'er was satisfied.  
Until at last he rose, and to the trees  
Bewailed his mournful fate in words like these :

‘ Ye woods, where lovers ever shelter find,  
Have you a grief than mine more cruel known,  
Or found a heart so vexed by fate unkind  
In all the long years that you here have  
grown ?  
I see—yet what I see may not obtain.  
I love—and yet deluded love in vain.

And still—O grief !—we are not parted now  
By roads or hills or walls with close shut gates.  
If but the water passage would allow  
He too expectant on my coming waits.  
For when I stretched my lips towards the spring  
He strove to mine his upturned face to bring.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

So slight the barrier that between us lay  
I almost might have touched his rosy cheek.  
Come, my beloved, come to me, I pray :  
Fly not from me when I your presence seek.  
You need not shun me. I am young and fair  
And nymphs have begged me oft their couch to  
share.

Your kindly looks have hope within me bred.  
I stretch my arms ; and you stretch yours to  
mine.  
I weep ; you seem at once to droop your head  
I smile ; your eyes with laughter gayly shine.  
And in the movements of your lips I guess  
An answer to the words that I address.

Ah ! now I know the truth. I, I am he !  
It is my very self that I desire,  
And my own image in the fountain see.  
I lit the flame that burns me with its fire ;  
What can I do ? Be lover now or loved ?  
Beggared by my own wealth, yet helpless  
proved.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

O would that from myself I might escape—  
Strange, strange petition!—Would he were  
not here,  
That love of mine, and had another shape  
From that which to my eyes now seems so  
dear.  
Full soon, methinks, from this sore load of grief  
My very agony will bring relief.

For I must die: and then my pain will end.  
Only I wish that he might longer live.  
Two deaths in this one blow will Fortune send  
And to two loving hearts destruction give.  
Alas, alas! I cannot bear my doom:  
My life is done ere it had reached its bloom.'

*Metam.*, III, 407-473.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

### **PYRAMUS AND THISBE**

*In the 'Pyramus and Thisbe' Ovid leaves for the moment the romantic legends of gods and heroes, and gives us a simple and instructive tale, explaining the origin of the mulberry's red juice. Of the two hundred and fifty stories in the Metamorphoses this is the only one that does not appear elsewhere in classical literature, although it was sufficiently familiar to Bottom and his companions. Probably Ovid borrowed it from one of those collections of Eastern tales that afterwards appear in literature as The Arabian Nights.*

IN all the East there lived no comelier pair  
Than Pyramus and Thisbe, none more fair  
In the great city with its walls of clay  
Kiln-burnt, where once Semiramis held sway.  
Neighbours they dwelt, their houses side by side,  
By nearness first and friendship's ties allied  
Till years brought love. In truth they would  
have made  
A happy couple ; but their sires forbade.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

And even then, despite their parents' ire,  
Their hearts still burn'd alike with mutual fire,  
Though none would help and looks and gestures  
    sad  
Were all the food their hidden passion had.

At last they found a chink which none had seen  
Within their party-wall—love made them keen  
Of vision and to them the hole revealed  
Which all the bygone years had lain concealed—  
A trusty channel for their speech, where through  
Soft words of love might pass and whispers low.  
Oft when they stood, thus parted yet so near,  
And caught each other's breath with eager ear ;  
' O cruel, cruel wall '—they both would sigh,  
' Why dost thou still our union deny ?  
One fond embrace, how small a thing were this !  
Seems it too much ? Then grant at least one  
    kiss ;  
And earn our further thanks ; for well we wot,  
That 'tis through thee our words have passage  
    got.'

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

So would they talk, and ere 'Good night' they  
said,  
A kiss unfelt upon the wall they laid.

Aurora now had put the stars to flight  
And on the herbage dried the hoar-frost white,  
When to their chink they came, still grieving sore  
And vowed that they could bear their pain no  
more.

'This night,' they whispered, 'while our  
guardians sleep  
And all is still, we from the house will creep  
Into the open fields about the town  
Hard by the mount where Ninus' tomb is  
shown,  
And rest in shadow 'neath the mulberry tall  
Which stands, with snow-white fruit a mark for  
all,  
Beside the running spring.' Such was their plan :  
And all too slow that day the long hours ran,  
Until at last the sun in Ocean's bed  
Sank, and from ocean dark night raised her head.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Then Thisbe oped the door and with veiled face  
Went all unnoticed to their trysting-place,  
And by the tomb sat down beneath the tree,  
Made bold by love. But in the darkness, see  
A lioness, her jaws adrip with blood,  
Who to the spring side came and drinking stood.  
The maiden looked, and to the cavern sped  
Leaving her cloak behind her as she fled.  
The beast, with thirst allayed, the garment  
found,  
Its owner safe, and dragged it o'er the ground  
With bloody jaws and rent it all around.

The youth drew near; and at that grievous sight,  
The cloak besmeared with blood, cried loud,  
“This night  
Shall bring two lovers to their death, for she  
Deserved to live: she died for love of me.  
Mine is the fault: why did I bid her come  
To face these dangers and to leave her home  
While I was absent? Come, ye lions, rend  
My guilty limbs as well, and make an end:  
Or else this sword upon me death shall send.”

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

So did he speak, and took the mangled gown  
To where the shadow of the tree was thrown.  
He kissed the stuff, and cried as his tears fell—  
“ You shall be reddened by my blood as well ; ”  
Then at the wold drew forth his trusty blade,  
And with one thrust an end of living made.  
His blood gushed out like water from the main,  
When some lead pipe has broken with the stain  
And lets the captive stream to heaven rise,  
Escaping from the hissing orifice.  
The tree ensanguined with the crimson dye  
Was reddened to its roots ; and that is why  
Still runs with blood the juice of mulberry.

*Metam.*, IV, 55-127.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

### SALMACIS AND HERMAPHRODITUS

*Hermaphroditus, son of Hermes and Aphrodite, possessed his father's youthful grace, his mother's invincible charm. The naiad Salmacis, living in wanton idleness, fell enamoured of him, and in answer to her prayer was united with him in one body; becoming the sexless bi-sexed creature that we call hermaphrodite. From this story come many of the more voluptuous passages in Shakespeare's 'Venus and Adonis,' although the language of the Roman poet is far less unbridled than that of the Elizabethan.*

No spear she ever holds, no painted quiver ;  
Never her time in hunting will she pass ;  
She bathes her comely limbs within her river  
And has its water for a looking glass ;  
With boxwood comb she combs her flowing  
tresses  
And wrapped in lucent robe the herbage presses.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

### **PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA**

*Andromeda, daughter of the great African chief Kepf—in Greek, Cepheus—as a punishment for her mother's boasting, was taken, by order of the god Ju-Jah Ammon, to the sea-shore, chained to a rock, and left to be devoured by a sea monster. There she was seen by Perseus, as he came flying back to Europe from the ends of the earth with the head of Medusa, and by him was rescued and married. The offspring of their union were the ancestors of the Persian nation; and this tale was considered by the ingenious Greeks to account for their swarthy complexions. Andromeda, it should be remembered, in spite of the representations of her legend in modern art, was an Ethiopian and coal-black.*

By god's decree Andromeda must pay  
For her proud mother's boasting: on rough  
stone . . .  
Fastened by chains a captive she must stay,  
To a sea monster left as prize alone.  
O cruel fate! O unjust punishment  
By ruthless Ammon on the daughter sent!

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

So fair she seemed that Perseus swiftly flying  
Thought her a statue carved in marble rare,  
Until he saw her in her anguish crying,  
While the soft wind disported with her hair.  
Then was his heart so thrilled with sudden love  
That almost he forgot his wings to move.

Swift he came down ; and, standing by the maiden,  
He cried, enraptured by the beauteous sight :  
“ Not with such chains as these should you be laden,  
But with those bonds that lovers’ hearts unite.  
Oh, tell me, pray, your name and your estate,  
And why a prisoner by this rock you wait ! ”

At first she made no answer to her lover,  
For she had ne’er been used with men to speak ;  
And if her hands had not been bound above her  
She would have sought to hide her blushing cheek.  
Only her eyes were free ; and these her fears  
Veiled in a mist of swiftly-rising tears.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

But still he urged her tell him of her sorrow ;  
And lest he should imagine she concealed  
A crime, from shame some courage she did  
borrow,

And all her mother's pride to him revealed.  
And as she spoke her tale was proven true ;  
For with a roar the monster swam in view.

Loud wept the virgin when from out the wave  
She saw that grisly head and shoulders rise ;  
And now her parents, helpless both to save,  
Fill the wide heaven with their woeful cries.  
For cries and tears alone were in their power,  
Nor could they help their child in that fell hour.

Then spake the stranger : “ Time will be  
now  
For weeping later ; 'tis but little space  
To aid her that the fates this hour allow.  
Perseus am I ; and if you seek my race,  
My mother was that prisoner pent in vain  
Whom the god filled with seed of golden rain.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

The snaky Gorgon's death attests my fame,  
And I have dared ~~in~~ wings the air to ride,  
And by my deeds of valour I might claim  
Your daughter, if I asked her, for my bride.  
But now, with heaven's favour, I will crown  
These with her life, and have her for my own."

*(Then follows the fight between Perseus and the monster, the hero's triumph, and the creature's death (704-734).)*

The shores resound with cheers and shouts of glee  
And the high hills whereon the great gods dwell,  
While father Cepheus and Cassiopē  
Salute the hero who has fought so well,  
And cry :—‘A son indeed to us has come,  
The prop and saviour of our royal home.’

The maiden too unfettered shows her face,  
Prize of the feat whereof she was the cause,

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

And Perseus longing for his bride's embrace  
To lave his war-worn hands fresh water draws;  
And that the Gorgon's head no stones may  
bruise  
On the hard sand green leaves and seaweed  
strews.

Then with fiesh turf he builds him altars three ;  
The left for Mercury, the next for Jove,  
And on the right, Minerva, one for thee,  
Whereon he slays a cow : the king above  
Receives an ox, and last he dyes the sod  
With bullock's blood to please the wingèd god.

And now the maid as guerdon he can take ;  
Nor wishes he for greater gift withal.  
Hymen and Love the marriage torches shake  
And fragrant incense fills the flower-decked  
hall :  
While merry songs, the signs of men's delight,  
To lyre and flute re-echo through the night.

*Metam.*, IV, 671-764.

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **ARETHUSA AND THE RIVER-GOD**

*The tale of Arethusa and Alpheus is a very curious example of local legend passing into mythology. In the island of Ortygia, near Syracuse, there was a fountain Arethusa, "the gusher"; in the Peloponnese on the west coast there was a river Alpheus. A persistent belief existed that between fountain and river there was an undersea connection, and that any object thrown into Alpheus would appear again in Arethusa. Hence the fable that in mortal shape the river-god loved the fountain nymph; that to escape from him she fled across the sea to Sicily, and that following her there he mingles his waters with hers in her new home.*

"I was a nymph," fair Arethusa said,  
"And in Achaea dwelt, a stalwart maid;  
To hunt and fix the nets my chiefest care,  
Heedless of beauty though they called me fair.  
My face to me gave nothing but annoy  
And that soft talk which other girls enjoy—

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

The sun shone bright behind me, and it seemed  
His shadow ran in front ; pr so I deemed  
It in my dread ; a surer cause of fear  
His trampling feet and breath as he drew near  
At last forspent I could no more endure  
And to Diana cried, my helper sure :—  
‘Save me, thy nymph, whom oft thou didst allow  
To bear thy shafts, thy quiver, and thy bow.’

The goddess heard and from the heavenly height  
Cast down a cloud, and hid me from his sight,  
So that at fault he quested for his prey  
Nor could behold where wrapped in mist I lay,  
And ‘Arethusa, Arethusa’ cried,  
Circling about the place where I did hide.  
Ah, how I trembled then ! e’en as poor sheep  
Tremble when wolves their ravening vigil keep  
Or as a hare that seeks ‘ncath briars to rest  
Nor dares to move, by questing hounds hard  
pressed : .  
For still he lingered and still watched the place  
From whence he saw my feet had left no trace.

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

Down all my limbs an icy moisture ran,  
And wheresoe'er I stepped a pool began,  
Made with the drops that from my body fell,  
And soon, more swiftly than this tale I tell,  
I changed to water ; and the god was fain  
To mingle with my waves, a stream again.  
But lo ! once more Diana came to aid,  
And cleft the earth, and for me passage made  
To her Ortygia, land I love so well,  
And there, returned to light, in this dear fount  
I dwell."

*Metam.*, V, 577-641.

## **STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"**

### **TEREUS AND PHILOMELA**

*The story of Tereus, Procne and Philomela, although extremely repulsive in many of its details, was a great favourite at Athens, where it was held up to girls as a warning against any relations with foreign men. Tereus of Thrace, after marrying Procne of Athens, fell enamoured of her sister Philomela, and, while bringing the girl to visit his wife, took her by force, cut out her tongue to prevent her betraying him, shut her up in a lonely house and pretended that she was dead. Philomela, however, contrived to tell the story of the crime on a piece of woven tapestry which she had conveyed to her sister, and Procne in revenge killed her only child, the boy Itys, and served him to his father as food. At the end all four characters in this woeful drama were changed into birds, Tereus becoming a hoopoe, Itys a sandpiper, Procne a swallow, and Philomela a nightingale.*

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

FIVE years had passed since Procne first was wed  
When to her lord she spake :—“ If any grace  
Of love has passed between us in this bed  
Grant me a boon, to see my sister’s face.  
Go, ask my father that to us she come  
A little while ; or let me else go home.”

Then Tereus launched his ship, and, sail and oar  
Both aiding, sped upon his watery road,  
And reached Piraeus and the Attic shore,  
And entered into Pandion’s abode.  
He clasped the old king’s hand, and spake him  
well  
And then began why he had come to tell.

“ Your daughter longs her sister, sire, to see,”  
He said ; “ and soon she will be safe restored,  
If you allow her now to come with me :  
That we will promise.” As he said the word  
Fair Philomel appeared, rich in her dress,  
But richer still in native loveliness.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

So look the nymphs who roam beneath the trees  
Through the green forest or the sprites who  
dwell,  
Deep in the water, gliding where they please,  
Whereof fond poets in their verses tell :  
Or so would look, if they were e'er arrayed  
In splendour as was then the Attic maid.

The sight at once set Tereus' heart aflame.  
E'en as ripe corn or leaves or hay in fire  
Are swift consumed away, so on him came  
A burning gust of sudden fierce desire.  
Her beauty and his mood swift passion move  
For men in Thrace are ever prone to love.

Forthwith he plans her handmaid's help to win  
And to corrupt her trusty nurse with gold  
And then by gifts to tempt herself to sin  
Yielding his kingdom that fair maid to hold :  
Or else by force to carry her away  
And at the price of war cling to his prey.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Fast prisoned is he now in passion's chain  
And there is nothing that he would not dare.  
His breast the fires of love can scarce contain  
To break through all delays his only care.  
So taking as a cloak his wife's behest  
With eager lips he urges her request.

Love makes him eloquent ; but when he pleads  
Most hotly, it is still in Procne's name  
He weeps, pretending that her words he heeds ;  
And from his guilt acquires a fairer fame.  
Alas for mortal folly ! He doth plan  
A crime most foul, yet seems an honest man.

Young Philomela too to go is fain.  
She takes her father's neck within her arm  
And whispers :—‘ Let me see my dear again ’—  
Hoping for joy whence naught shall come but  
harm ;  
And while she knows not yet of his intent  
Seeks to beguile him with soft blandishment.

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

Upon her Tereus looks with burning eyes,  
And dreams already of unlawful bliss  
When he shall have her body as his prize ;  
While as he sees her fondle him and kiss  
He wishes now that he her father were ;  
Nor if her father, would the virgin spare.

He finds fresh food and fuel for his lust . .  
In each embrace she on the king bestows ;  
Until at last o'ercome Pandion must  
Yield to the pair, and their request allows.  
The hapless maid rejoices to believe  
That both have won, who both so soon shall  
grieve.

Now the sun's task was done : his chariot falls  
Down through the West, the while a feast is  
made  
And wine flows free within the royal halls,  
Until at last in slumber all are laid :  
All save the Thracian ; never can he rest,  
So fierce the throb of longing in his breast.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

He sees again the maiden's blushing face  
And the quick movement of her slender fingers.  
He dreams he holds her in a close embrace  
And on her secret charms in fancy lingers.  
All through the night his thoughts keep him  
awake  
And from his own desires new favour take.

So morning came, and on his painted barque  
Fair Philomela stepped to cross the sea,  
Swift fell the oars churning the water dark  
Until the shore lay dim upon their lee.  
'Hurrah,' cried Tercus; 'we have left the  
land :  
I have my wish : she's here beneath my hand.'

*Metam.*, VI, 438-531.

## *STORIES FROM “METAMORPHOSES”*

### CEPHALUS AND PROCRIS

*There is material for at least two modern novels in the story of Cephalus and Procris, which contains much more of psychological interest, much more of the finer shades of amorous feeling than is usual in Greek mythology. The hero's wonderful bound Lailaps and his magic javelin, which always hit its mark and then returned, are extraneous ornaments : the real basis of the story is purely human, the mutual and ungrounded suspicions of a husband and a wife. The episode of the wife's jealousy of a supposed ‘Aura’, aroused by foolish gossip, is told by Ovid both in the Ars Amoris and in the Metamorphoses. Equally romantic is the story of the husband's foolish doubting, as told here by himself.*

Two months it was since Procris was my bride  
When on a morn, as by Hymettus' crest  
I spread my nets, Aurora me espied,  
Goddess of dawn in saffron vesture dressed.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

She burned with sudden passion, woe the day !  
And all unwilling carried me away.

Forgive me, queen ; but I the truth must tell.  
As sure as thou with rosy face dost shine  
In that dim land where night and morning dwell,  
Quaffing the nectar's juice with lips divine,  
So sure my love for Procris stayed : to her  
My every word, my thoughts still constant were.

Of wedlock would I speak, and love's young joy,  
And the warm couch by me so soon forsaken,  
Until the goddess cried in sad annoy :—

“ Ingrate, be gone : you'll wish you ne'er had  
taken

Your Procris for your wife in days to come ;  
Get to her now.” And so she sent me home.

But as I went I pondered on her warning  
And feared perchance that Procris too had  
been

Unfaithful to our troth since that fell morning  
When I was borne away by heaven's queen.

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

Her beauty and her youth set me afraid,  
Though well I knew she was a modest maid.

I had been absent from her for a season,  
And she from whom I came was light of love.  
Fond hearts like mine fear all without a reason  
And I resolved her faithfulness to prove.  
I changed my visage, by Aurora's power,  
And as a stranger sought our marriage bower.

But when to Athens' sacred town I came  
And saw my home before me safe restored,  
Unharmed I found it, chaste and free of blame,  
Yet sad and anxious for its absent lord.  
And many a trick and turn must I essay  
Before unto my wife I found my way.

Scarce could I bear so basely to deceive her  
When I beheld her fair yet sorrowing face :  
I longed without more trial to believe her  
And take her to my arms in fond embrace.  
Sad were her looks ; but sadness beauty gave  
Such as no other woman e'er shall have.

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## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Fondly she seemed to yearn for the departed,  
Who long had left her to her loneliness :  
Yet still my doubts prevailed, and soon I started  
With flattering words a lover's suit to press.  
But to my pleas she only made reply :—  
“ One lord I servc and his alone am I.”

Had I been sane such words had been enow ;  
But still to slay my happiness I tried.  
I promised on her fortunes to bestow,  
And, when she wavered, in base triumph  
cried :—  
“ It is no lover, wanton, that you see ;  
Your husband knows now your adultery.”

No word she spake, but silent in her shame  
Fled from her treacherous spouse and from  
his home,  
And hating all men to Diana came  
And with her on the mountain side did roam ;  
While I abandoned felt within me burn  
Love's fiercest fire and longed for her return.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

I sent and craved her pardon and did own  
    My cruel sin, and said to gifts so great  
I too had yielded and I was alone,  
    Until at last she pitied my sad state,  
Her shame avenged. And so I won my wife  
Again and lived for years a happy life.

*Metam.*, VII, 700-752.

## PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

*Many of the Jewish stories have their analogies in Greek mythology, and the legend of Philemon and Baucis offers some curious resemblances to the tale of Lot and his wife. Jove and Mercury, visiting the earth, are refused shelter by all the country-side until they come to the cottage where old Philemon and Baucis live in coniented poverty.. They freely offer the strangers all they possess, and in return are saved from the destruction by flood which Jove sends upon their wicked*

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

*neighbours. Their final happy transformation  
into trees concludes the history and is here told.*

ONE goose they had, guard of their poor domain ;  
Whom for their guests' delight they would have  
slain.

But he was strong of wing, and they were old  
And scarce had strength the fluttering bird to  
hold,

Until at last he seemed for aid to flee  
To Jove himself and sheltered by his knee.

' Slay not this bird,'—the king of heaven cried,  
' I am great Jove and on this country-side  
' Must vengeance take. But you shall feel no  
ill :

' Leave this your house and come to yonder  
hill.'

The aged pair obeyed the god's command,  
And taking up their staves with trembling hand  
Climbed the long slope. Soon on the crest they  
stood,

And gazing back beheld a mighty flood

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

That swept tumultous through the fertile  
plains

So that of all the houses now remains  
Only their humble roof. They looked in awe,  
Weeping their neighbours' fate ; when lo they  
saw

The cot, which for themselves had been too  
small,

Change shape and grow into a temple tall.  
Pillars of stone replace its wooden beams,  
The thatch turns yellow and now golden seems,  
The doors are rich embossed, and all around  
Fair slabs of marble hide the naked ground.  
Then said great Jove :—‘ Goodman and thou  
goodwife,

Ask what you will for this your mortal life ;  
It shall be yours.’ Philemon took aside  
Old Baucis for a while and thus replied :—  
‘ Let us both serve yon temple, she and I ;  
‘ And since we have ever lived in harmony  
‘ Grant at one hour that death to both may come  
‘ And that I never see my dear wife’s tomb,

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

‘ Nor that it be her lot to build me mine.’  
Their prayer was answered, and within the  
shrine ‘  
They lived at peace together, and foredone  
By years and weakness still in love were one.  
At last one evening standing by the door,  
As they recalled the bygone days of yore,  
Each saw the other take a leafy dress  
And felt a growth of bark about them press.  
‘ Farewell, dear mate,’ they cried, ‘ Dear mate,  
farewell :’  
And straightway yielded to the magic spell.  
Such was their end. The peasants of that land  
Show even now two trees that neighbours stand  
With double trunk, and make their humble  
prayer  
To good Philemon and good Baucis there.

*Metam.*, VIII, 684-721.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

### THE PROFITABLE CHILD

*The story of Erysichthon and his daughter, although it is linked up with the ancient saga and supplied with divine personages, is in its true nature a pure fantasy and might appear in a collection of fairy tales. The wicked Erysichthon sins against the goddess Ceres by cutting down a sacred oak-tree, and in revenge she summons the demon Hunger from the wastes of Scythia and sends her, a kind of vampire succube, to him in his sleep. As the result he is tormented with an insatiable desire for food, to satisfy which he sells all his ancestral possessions, and at last, as is here related, his daughter. Finally he is reduced to eating his own flesh and dies in agony.*

BUT still his rage for eating never ceased  
And hunger fierce devoured him unappeased.  
To it he gave his house, his lands, his gold :  
Only his child remained—and her he sold.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

But she rebelled and to the god of sea :—  
‘ Save me,’ she cried, ‘ for my virginity  
Thou once didst take, nor let me be a slave  
Whom as thy lover thou hast deigned to have.  
Her prayer was answered. As upon the shore  
She stood, a change came o’er her : who before  
Had been a girl now as a fisher stood  
With line and baited angle seeking food.  
Her master looked, and to the fisher spake :—  
‘ You who with rod and hook your dinner take,  
So may the sea be calm and trustful fish  
Come to the bait according to your wish  
And never feel the hook until they’re laid  
Safe at your feet ; tell me where is the maid  
Who stood just now with locks dishevelled here ;  
For see, her footprints plainly still appear ? ’  
The girl perceived the power of Neptune’s gift  
And said :—‘ Excuse me, sir ; I may not lift  
My eyes from off this pool, nor have I seen  
Aught but these waves since I’ve a-fishing been.  
So may kind Neptune help me in my art  
As it is true that no one in this part

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

Of the shore has stood for quite a long time  
back,  
No man and certainly no maid, alack.'

The buyer in the fisher's words believed  
And left her, by the story quite deceived.  
And then her former shape to her returned  
And for her father many a fee she earned.  
For when he saw that she could change her  
look  
From purchasers a cheating price he took.  
Now as a mare he sold her to them, now  
She was a bird, a fallow-deer, a cow.  
And so for many weeks she did supply  
Victuals wherewith his greed to satisfy.

*Metam., VIII, 843-874.*

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **THE TRANSFORMATION OF DRYOPE**

*The story of Dryopē is a striking example of the sanctity which Greek religion attached to trees and flowers, and of the retribution which might fall upon any one who even unwittingly did them damage. All trees and shrubs were potentially the abode of a nymph—or rather they were the nymph herself in another guise—and to injure them was to injure the divinity. The tale is told by Iolē, Dryope's half-sister, to Alcmena, mother of Heracles.*

THERE is a lake, with myrtle bushes crowned,  
Whose shores soft sloping make a beach around.  
Thither my sister came, nor dreamed of harm,  
Holding her infant child upon her arm,  
A nursling at the breast ; for she had mind  
Flowers as a garland for the nymphs to find.  
Beside the pool a water lotus grew,  
Its blooms, not fruited yet, of every hue

**STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"**

That Tyrian vats afford : her babe to please  
My sister stooped and plucked him some of these.  
I in my turn bent down to pluck as well  
When, as I looked, from those bright blossoms  
    fell

Red drops of blood and through the bush  
    hard by  
A shudder ran, as though of agony.         •  
For you must know within that bush of old  
Fair Lotis refuge took—the tale is told  
E'en now by rustic hinds—what time she fled  
Priapus : there her human limbs she shed ;  
But in the foliage still lives on the same  
And still is lotus called by her own name.

But this my sister knew not : so dismayed  
To the kind nymphs she for forgiveness prayed  
And would have left the place: but to the  
    ground  
Her feet were rooted by strange fetters bound.  
To tear herself away in vain she strove ;  
Naught of her body, save her arms, would move.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Her lower limbs by bark are held embraced,  
Which slowly climbing rises to her waist,  
And when in grief she tries to rend her hair  
She finds no locks but only foliage there.  
Her babe Amphissos feels his mother's breast  
Grow cold and hard, and when to her he pressed  
No longer could he draw his milky food.  
I saw it all : yet helpless there I stood,  
And while I clasped the tree trunk to my side  
I longed within that self same bark to hide.

But lo, her husband and her hapless sire  
Come, making search, and eagerly inquire  
Where Dryope may be. Naught can I say,  
But point towards the lotus. They straightway  
Kiss the warm wood, and falling prostrate down  
Embrace the roots of her who was their own.  
For of my sister naught was now left free  
Save her dear face : the rest of her was tree.  
Yet from her leaves the tears fell fast like rain  
And while her lips as yet unclosed remain

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

She poured forth these complaints into the air :—

‘ Believe me now : by all the gods I swear,  
I have not merited this dreadful thing :  
Guiltless has been my life : this suffering  
Is not crime’s punishment. Nay, if I lie  
May my green foliage wither, scar and dry,  
And I by axes keen in sunder hewn •  
Be logs upon a fire for burning strewn.  
Now take my infant from the boughs that  
were

His mother’s arms, and let a nurse have care  
To give him milk, and let him come and play  
Beneath my spreading leaves, and sadly say,  
When he has learned to talk :—“ Within this  
tree

My mother lives though she is hid from me.”  
But bid him fear the waters of the lake  
Nor ever from these boughs their blossoms  
break. •  
But rather think that every coppice hides  
A goddess who within its depths abides.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Good-bye, dear husband : if you love your wife,  
Save these my branches from the ruthless knife  
Nor to my foliage let stray goats come nigh ;  
Good-bye, dear father ; sister dear, good-bye !  
Alas, no longer to you can I bend ;  
You must stretch up and me assistance lend.  
Give me my babe to kiss, while yet I may  
Feel his dear lips. Ah, no more can I say.  
Around my neck a choking grasp I feel,  
The coils of bark that now above me steal,  
And rob me of my sight with their close bands.  
Ah me, I shall not need your loving hands  
To close my eyes in death, ah me, ah me !'  
Therewith she ceased to speak, and ceased to be.

*Metam.*, IX, 334-392.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

### **IPHIS AND IANTHE**

*Before the birth of Iphis the husband of Telethusa declared that he would not rear a girl child. Pretence accordingly was made that Iphis was a boy. The name, like our Leslie, is of common gender, and on reaching puberty a marriage was arranged with Ianthe, a neighbour's daughter. Telethusa in despair prayed to Isis to change her child's sex, and Iphis by the grace of heaven became in reality a man.*

Now thirteen years had passed, and for his son  
The father sought a wife in union,  
And chose Ianthe, of all maids in Crete  
The fairest, for his Iphis bride most meet.  
Equal in age, in beauty equal, they  
Had shared alike their childhood's tasks and play  
And to their virgin hearts alike there came  
The throb of love and love's consuming flame.  
But not alike their hopes of future joy,  
Nor the fond fears that all their thoughts  
employ :

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Ianthe dreams of marriage when that she,  
Whom still she thinks a man, her man shall be :  
But Iphis knows that love for her is vain,  
For never shall it full fruition gain ;  
Yet by the knowledge feels a fiercer fire,  
Maiden for maiden burning with desire.

“ Oh, what will be the end ! ”—she weeping  
cries,  
“ Have you no ruth, ye dwellers in the skies,  
To send upon me this unnatural grief  
So monstrous that it passes men’s belief !  
I must be strong and banish from my heart  
This hopeless love where reason has no part.  
Hope begets love and hope keeps love alive  
And my own sex of hope must me deprive.  
My wishes, true, are granted : God has given  
All that I prayed to gain from kindly heaven ;  
But nature still forbids, and when I go  
To play the husband’s part she will say, no.  
Ianthe will be mine—O fate accurst—  
And yet not mine ; mid water I shall thirst.

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

For how can Hymen bless this manless rite  
Where bride meets bride upon the wedding  
night?"

So would she cry aloud and cry in vain,  
The while Ianthe with an equal pain  
Desired the nuptial hour when they should meet  
And she her lover as a husband greet.  
But Telethusa, fearing what she sought,  
Reasons of sickness and sad omens brought  
Why they should stay unwed, and all things tried  
To keep her Iphis from Ianthe's side.  
Yet soon the day drew nigh : no more delay  
Can Telethusa win the time to stay  
When Iphis must be wed ; so with their hair  
Loosed from the fillets thus she made her  
prayer :  
" Help us, dear Isis, heal our sore distress,  
As erst thou didst with saving counsel bless ;  
For that my daughter lives the light to see  
And I unpunished go is thanks to thee."

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

Tears followed with her words. At once bright  
gleams  
Shoot from the goddess' horns, her altar seems  
To move in presage of a change to come,  
And Telethusa went rejoicing home.  
For as she left the temple, at her side  
Her Iphis walked—but with a longer stride  
Than erst she used, and with a darker hue  
Upon her cheeks than once her mirror knew.  
Her looks less timid seemed, her hair unbound  
Less flowing, and in all her limbs was found  
More than a woman's strength : in very truth  
She who had been a girl was now a youth !  
The morning came ; great Juno and her child,  
Dan Hymenaeus, with queen Venus smiled  
Upon the pair ; and Iphis to his bed,  
A stalwart husband, fair Ianthe led.

*Metam.*, IX, 718-797.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

### PYGMALION AND THE IMAGE

*The story of Pygmalion, like that of Pyramus, is probably eastern in origin and is connected with the island of Cyprus, one of the stepping-stones in the passage of Aphrodite worship from Asia to Europe. From Pygmalion and his image descend Paphos, her son Cinyras, his daughter Myrrha, and her son Adonis.*

FOR long Pygmalion lived in single state  
Holding the race of womankind in hate,  
Until at last by idle fancy led,  
An image for himself he fashioned.  
Ivory he takes, and thence with happy art  
Carves forth a figure, perfect in each part,  
More fair than woman ; and his skill to prove  
With the white statue falls himself in love.  
Art conceals art ; she seems a living maid,  
Alert and ready, were she not afraid  
To vex her maker, who by love inspired  
Is for the sculptured shape with passion fired.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Often he lifts his hands the work to try  
If it be breathing flesh or ivory ;  
Nor will confess its lips still cold remain  
To all his kisses, nor can kiss again.  
He speaks soft words, and clasps it to his arm,  
Fearing the while lest he should do it harm,  
And fondles every limb with loving embrace  
warm.

Soon he brings presents, such as girls delight ;  
Pebbles, and rounded shells, and nosegays bright,  
A bird, a lily, or a painted ball,  
Or amber tears that from the poplars fall.  
Draped in soft robes, with rings upon its hands  
And necklets round its neck, the statue stands.  
With chains and pearls adorned it seems most  
fair,  
But yet more comely when body bare  
It lies upon a couch all purple spread,  
And on soft pillows rests its shapely head,  
Called by Pygmalion bride and consort of his  
bed.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

Come let us rest beneath it."--At the word  
Within his arms she sank upon the sward,  
And while her head upon his bosom fell  
Began with frequent kiss her tale to tell.

*(Then follows the long story of Hippomenes and Atalanta, and how the hero by help of the golden apples given him by Venus conquered the maiden in the foot race and won her as his bride : how he then repaid her with ingratitude and was incited by her to have union with his wife in the temple of Cybele, who revenged this profanation by changing them both into savage lions.)*

So Venus warned her lover, ere she sped  
Borne on swan chariot from their grassy bed.  
But manly spirits ne'er for warnings care :  
His hounds had roused a wild boar from his lair,  
Swift following on his trail : the boy in haste  
Snatched up his spear and the huge monster  
chased.. .  
One glancing blow he struck as from the wood  
The boar broke out, and then no longer stood

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

The beast with curved snout shook loose the  
spear,  
Then charged him as he fled in panic fear.  
Deep in his groin his tusk he did ensheathe  
And on the sand Adonis fell in death.

*Metam.*, X, 525-716

## **THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS**

*The Thracian minstrel Orpheus appears in the legend under a double aspect. As the devoted husband he goes down to the nether world and by the power of song almost succeeds in rescuing his wife Eurydice from death. But he also appears as an ascetic and a woman-hater, instructing his disciples in the rules of monastic chastity. Hence his painful death at the hands of the Thracian women.*

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

WHILE with such strains he drew the trees along  
And beasts and rocks alike obeyed his song,  
The frenzied dames of Thrace in skins arrayed  
Beheld great Orpheus as he music made,  
And cried, their tresses on the light wind  
borne,—

‘Behold the man who holds us all in scorn.’  
One cast a spear against the singer’s face :  
But it refused to wound, and left no trace  
Save one faint mark. A stone another threw  
But it was checked as through the air it flew  
By those soft strains where voice and cithæi meet  
And fell in suppliant fashion at his feet.

But not e’en this their passion could restrain.  
Rage and mad fury in their bosoms reign :  
Which yet would have been stayed by music’s  
might

Did not their shouts and beating hands unite  
With horn and drum and Berecynthian flute  
To drown the melody of Orpheus’ lute.  
So that the stones no longer felt his spell  
And ’neath their furious hail the minstrel fell.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Then did the Maenads drive the birds away  
Still rapt by Orpheus' voice, and the array  
Of snakes and beasts that as an audience stood,  
And dared to dye their hands with his pure  
blood.

Even as sparrows will an owl attack  
Caught in the daylight roaming, or a pack  
Of hounds within Rome's Amphitheatre grand  
About a stag in ravening circle stand.

They hurl against the bard their vine-clad  
wands  
Ne'er made for men to use with murderous  
hands :  
Clods, sticks, and stones fly fast from every side  
And chance real weapons to their rage supplied.  
For oxen, as it happed, were ploughing near  
And at the sight the husbandmen in fear  
Gave o'er their toilsome task and fled away  
Leaving their tools all scattered as they lay,  
Mattocks, and heavy hoes, and pointed rakes  
Which for herself each frenzied Maenad takes.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

First they set hands upon the patient kine  
And tear them piecemeal, heads and limbs and  
chine,

And then the bard attack and lay him low  
Nor to his cries will any mercy show.

Unheeded now the voice, though ne'er before,  
Which had entranced the listening woods of  
yore;

And through those lips, that rocks and beasts  
obeyed,

His soul, breathed forth, its last faint passage  
made.

Each bird, each wilding creature wept for thee,  
Dear Orpheus, every stone and every tree.  
And as behind thee they had used to go  
So now the woodlands shed their leaves in woe.  
With their own tears the rivers ran in flood  
And all the nymphs of water and of wood  
With hair dishevelled and with sombre dress  
Proclaimed to fount and forest their distress.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

The limbs were scattered ; but upon its waves  
Thy head and lyre the rushing Hebrus saves ;  
And as they floated down the friendly tide—  
O wondrous tale !—thy lifeless voice replied  
To the lyre's loud lament and all around  
The banks re-echoed with the mournful sound.

*Metam.*, XI, 1-53.

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### PELEUS AND THETIS

*The common legend tells how Peleus, son of Aeacus, prince of Thessaly, was the most pious of men, and as a reward for his righteousness received from Zeus the sea goddess Thetis in marriage. Ovid prefers a different version of the story.*

THERE is a bay on the Thessalian shore  
That curves in crescent fashion : either head  
Runs out to sea, and if there were but more  
Of water, ships might shelter free from dread ;  
So firm its beach that footsteps leave no trace,  
So clear of weed that runners there might race.

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

New shapes she takes, but now he holds her fast  
With hands tight pinioned and her limbs wide  
thrown;

Until by force subdued she sobs at last ;  
“ ’Tis heaven’s will : have Thetis for your  
own.”

The prince triumphant clasps her as she lies  
And gets Achilles on his yielding prize..

*Metam.*, XI, 229-265.

CEYX DROWNED AT SEA

*The tale of King Ceyx and his faithful wife Alcyone is one of the most pathetic in the Metamorphoses, and the episode of the tempest is told with all Ovid’s usual skill. In the sequel Alcyone finds her husband’s corpse upon the shore, and the gods in pity change them both into sea birds.*

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

SKILL fails and courage yields : each wave  
beneath

Seems now to bring the sure approach of  
death.

Some weep aloud, some sit in silent grief,  
Some call upon the gods to send relief,  
And with their hands uplifted to the sky  
Beg for the burial that the waves deny.  
Some think of fathers, and of kinsmen  
some,

Others of children, others of their home  
Whereto, alas, they never, nevermore shall  
come.

But Ceyx thinks of his Alcyone ;  
Upon his lips there is no one but she.  
He longs for her alone, and yet to-day  
His heart is glad that she is far away.  
How would he love to see his native shore  
And turn his eyes towards his home once  
more !

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

But where he is he knows not ; with such  
might

The billows swell, and heaven is veiled from  
sight

By murky clouds more dark than gloom of  
blackest night.

The furious tempest breaks the swaying mast,  
The rudder tears away ; and now at last  
One overwhelming wave, as heaven high,  
Above all others wins the victory.

Onward it sweeps, by its own fury borne,  
Like some huge mountain from its foothills  
torn,

Athos or Pindus, till too monstrous grown  
It crashes on the ship, which reeling down  
Sinks to the sands below, and leaves its men to  
drown.

- -

Most with their vessel perish in the deep  
And ne'er returned to light entombment keep

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

In ocean's darkness ; those who still survive  
To stay afloat on broken wreckage strive.  
Ceyx himself instead of sceptre grasps  
A shattered spar and calls with panting gasps  
Upon his sire for aid, yet calls in vain ;  
And, as he breasts the fierce tempestuous main  
“Alcyone,” he cries, and cries aloud again.

While he has strength to swim 'tis that dear  
name  
His pallid lips amid the surges frame,  
And to high heaven make their piteous  
prayer—  
“ Ye cruel waves, my lifeless body bear  
To her I long for, that upon the strand  
I may be buried by her loving hand.”  
Such was his final cry ; and when the strife  
Of wind and water robbed him of his life  
His last low murmur was “ Alcyone, my wife.”

*Metam., XI, 537-567.*

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

### THE PALACE OF SLEEP

*After the death of Geyx, Juno takes compassion on Alcyone and Morpheus is sent in a dream to tell the wife of her husband's fate. The episode gives Ovid opportunity for one of his finest pieces of imaginative description.*

THERE is a mountain in Cimmeria's lands  
That holds within its sides a cavern deep.  
Sunless at dawn, at noon, at eve it stands  
The home and hiding-place of laggard sleep.  
Soft coiling vapours breathe forth from the  
ground  
And veils of darkness cast their shade around.

No wakeful cock upon its murky wall  
With lifted crest proclaims the rising day ;  
No hissing geese give out their heedful call ;  
No watch-dog breaks the silence with his bay ;  
No wolves, no sheep, no human voices rude,  
No rustling leaves disturb the quietude.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

"Tis the abode of rest. Dark Lethe's stream  
Invites to slumber, murmuring in the gloom,  
With waters that themselves entranced seem ;  
And by the entrance countless poppies bloom  
From whose rich juices dewy night distils  
Sleep, and the earth with drowsy effluence fills.

There is no doorway there whose creaking hinge  
Might intermit the silence as it turns  
And on the stillness of the night impinge,  
No porter there his watchful taper burns.  
But in the midmost cave is set a bed,  
Dark hued and soft and with black covers  
spread.

Thereon the god himself a dreaming lies,  
His limbs relaxed at ease in languorous rest,  
While empty visions flit before his eyes  
In endless company about him pressed,  
Unnumbered as the sands beside the main,  
As leaves upon the trees, as ears of grain.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

To him fair Iris came and brushed aside  
The phantom shapes that would have barred  
her way.

Awakened by the gleam the dull god sighed  
And his closed eyes to open did essay.  
And scarce at length from his own self set free  
He asked :—‘ Why, maiden, hast thou come to  
me ? ’

‘ O Sleep, thou rest for all things, Sleep most  
kind,  
Balm of the soul,’ she said, ‘ who drivest grief  
In flight, and solace for our toils canst find  
So that in thee we ever have relief,  
Fashion a dream and let it straightway go  
And to Alcyone the shipwreck show.’

*Metam.*, XI, 592-628.

## **THE MIRROR OF VENUS**

### **THE HOUSE OF RUMOUR**

*This is a companion picture to the description that precedes, and an equally good example of Ovid's powers of invention. Before the Greek hosts arrive at Troy, their approach is announced from Rumour's central exchange.*

THERE is a place 'twixt land and sea and sky  
Where close the confines of three empires lie.  
Thence all things can be seen both far and near,  
And every sound comes to the listening ear.  
Dame Rumour dwells upon that mountainside,  
Her house with thousand entrances flung wide  
And open night and day. Of noisy brass  
Its walls are made and sounds bewildering pass  
Backwards and forwards, echoed to and fro,  
So that each single word is rendered two.

That house is never silent, never still ;  
And yet no noisy shouts its chambers fill.

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

But a dull murmur, like the ocean's roar  
Reverberating on some distant shore,  
Or the last rumblings of the thunder, when  
Jove stirs the clouds in heaven to frighten men.  
From hall to hall a shifting concourse hies,  
Falsehoods and Truths, Imaginings and Lies.  
One with vain gossip fills his idle ears,  
Another carries forth the tales he hears;  
And by repeating make each story grow  
Adding a little more than what they know.  
Here is Rash Error, here is Fond Belief,  
And Foolish Confidence, and Panic Grief,  
And Sudden Strife, and Doubtful Whispering :  
While Rumour borne aloft on busy wing  
Sees all that's done in heaven and earth and sea  
And searches the wide world for novelty.

*Metam., XII, 39-63.*

## THE MIRROR OF VENUS

### THE CENTAUR LOVERS

*The Twelfth Book of 'the Metamorphoses ostensibly treats of the same subject as the Iliad, the fighting of the Greek army before Troy. But actually most of the book is occupied by Nestor's long story of the contest between the Centaurs and the Lapithae at the marriage feast at Piritheüs. The most effective episode in his narrative here follows.*

If to a Centaur beauty we allow  
Then Cyllarus was beautiful, I trow.  
His beard was golden-red, just newly grown,  
And on his shoulders golden locks hung down.  
His face was bright and keen: his stalwart breast,  
Shoulders and arms and neck and all the rest  
Of man about him by a sculptor's art  
Seemed to be fashioned, and the equine part  
Was equal thereunto, for Castor meet  
If he were all a horse, so for the seat  
His back was shaped, so firm the muscles rose  
Upon his brawny shoulders as he goes.

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

Blacker than pitch was he, yet white of tail  
And white legged too. Full many a female  
Of his own race had wooed him, but alone  
Hylonomé had won him for her own.  
Fairest was she of all the Centaur kind  
Who dwell within the forest, fair and kind ;  
And by the love which freely she confessed  
She, and no other, Cyllarus possessed..

She did not scorn the toilet's artful aid,  
So far as toilet suits a Centaur maid.  
Oft would she comb her tresses : oft entwine  
Roses and violets and rosemary  
About her head, and often would she wear  
A wreath of snow-white lilies in her hair.  
Twice every day she washed her rosy checks  
Beside the brook that from the mountain seeks  
The plain of Pagasae, and twice did lave  
Her comely body in the rippling wave ;  
While for her dress with anxious care she chose  
The most becoming skins of dappled does.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

So Cyllarus and she in equal love  
Would rest together and together rove,  
United in the woods and in their home,  
And now together to the feast had come.  
As the fight raged they battled side by side  
When lo, a spear—whence thrown I ne'er  
espied—  
Pierced through the Centaur's breast, his neck  
beneath,  
And touched his heart, and straightway brought  
him death.

His wife drew out the shaft and in her arm  
Took his poor body, and with kisses warm  
Sought to hold back the life that ebbed away  
And with fond hand the rushing blood to stay.  
But when she felt that his last breath had fled  
And saw her love before her stricken dead  
She cried aloud—her words I could not hear—  
And flung herself upon the deadly spear.  
And so by death united in one place  
They lay together in their last embrace .

*Metam.*, XII, 393-428.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

### THE CYCLOPS IN LOVE

*The ingenuity of the Alexandrian poets turned the savage Polyphemus into a love-lorn swain. Ovid follows them to some extent, but makes the giant revert to his wonted cruelty. The story is told by the nymph Galatea, "The milk white maid," who, in the arms of Acis, listens to the Cyclops' song, familiar to English ears in Handel's setting, and is witness of her lover's death.*

A WEDGE-SHAPED headland runs into the deep,  
On either side the billows foam and leap ;  
Hither the Cyclops climbed, and had no mind  
To tend his sheep who followed close behind,  
But careless sat him down. Before his feet  
He threw the pine-tree, for a ship's mast meet,  
That served him as a staff upon his way,  
And on his shepherd's pipe began to play.  
Its hundred reeds re-echoed all around,  
The mountains and the ocean felt the sound,

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

And as I lay within my distant cave,  
Rocked in my Acis' arms beside the wave,  
The song he sang cam'e to me on the breeze,  
Still I remember it, in words like these :—

“ My Galatea is more white  
Than privet flowers, than glass more bright ;  
Alders are not so slim and tall,  
Or frolic kids so gay withal ;  
She is more smooth than sea-worn shells,  
More blooming than the meadow dells.

The winter's sun, the summer's shade  
Are not so welcome as my maid :  
The crystal ice is not so clear,  
The plane so noble, fruit so dear.  
Sweeter than grapes that ripe have grown,  
More soft than curdled milk or down;  
More fair than watered gardens she,  
If only she were kind to me.

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

But Galatea's wilder far  
Than untamed cattle ever are,  
More false than water, hard than oak,  
More boisterous than a rushing brook,  
Tougher than vines or willows prove,  
And harder than these rocks to move.

More fierce than fire, than the wave  
More deaf if you her mercy crave ;  
A peacock praised is not so vain,  
Nor thorns so sharp your flesh to pain ;  
A she-bear will more pity show,  
A trodden snake more grace allow.  
And—what is worst of all I find—  
She can run swifter than the wind.

And yet if she the truth could guess  
She would regret her hastiness,  
Herself condemn her coy delay  
And beg that I might constant stay ;  
For on the hills my safe retreat  
Knows not of cold nor summer's heat.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Apples, and on each trailing vine  
Grapes gold and purple—all are mine  
And shall be hers : she may partake  
Of berries in the forest brake,  
Plums waxen pale and red beside,  
If only she will be my bride.  
Chestnuts and arbute she shall have  
And every tree shall be her slave.

These are my sheep, and there are more  
That feed along the hills and shore  
And in my cavern have their stall.  
Indeed I cannot count them all  
If you of me their number ask :  
Such reckoning is a poor man's task.  
But without telling you can see  
How full of milk their udders be.

Come listen to my humble prayer.  
For Jupiter I have no care,

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"* \*

His thunder and his levin brand ;  
But as your suppliant now I stand.  
And tremble at a Nereid maid,  
I who of heaven was ne'er afraid.

I should not be quite so forlorn  
If all men's love you held in scorp.  
When you the Cyclops hateful find,  
Why to young Acis are you kind ?  
He may himself and you delight,  
But let him come and test my might  
And I will tear his limbs in twain  
And scatter them upon your main.

For oh I rage, I boil, I burn !  
I know not where my steps to turn.  
With wrath and anger I'm possessed.  
I feel deep down within my breast  
A fierce volcano raging there—  
But Galatea does not care ! ”

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Such was his vain complaints : and then he rose  
And even as a bull in frenzy goes  
When he has lost his mate and will not stay  
But over hills and pastures makes his way,  
So did the Cyclops in his fury haste  
And coming on as we lay embraced  
Expecting nothing less than him to see  
He cried ;—‘ This union your last shall be.’

His voice was such as suits a giant’s frown.  
High Etna shuddered. I in fear plunged down  
Beneath the neighbouring waves. My Acis flies  
And for assistance to his parents cries.  
But the fierce Cyclops followed as he fled  
And tore a mass of mountain from its bed  
And hurled it at him. One piece of the stone  
Fell on my Acis—and his life was done.

*Metam.*, XIII, 778-804.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

### CIRCE'S VENGEANCE

*One day a fisherman of Euboea named Glaucus noticed that the fish he had caught and flung on the grass, after nibbling the herbage came to life again and leaped into the sea. He himself tasted the grass with the result that he immediately turned into a merman and took up his dwelling in deep waters. In his new shape he fell in love with the maiden Scylla, and on her scorning his suit swam to Circe's island to ask the witch's help, with the result that is here told. The name Scylla means 'a small female dog', and may in itself be the origin of the legend.*

AND now the merman swimming through the foam

To Circe's magic palaces had come.

Full of wild creatures. First he greeting said  
To the sun's daughter, then his prayer he made :—

'Take pity on a god, O queen divine,  
For you alone can help this love of mine'

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

If of your aid I to you worthy seem.  
How great the power of herbs no man, I deem,  
Knows more than I, who by their magic power  
Was changed into this shape in one brief hour.

Now hear the reason why I seek your aid.  
Hard by Messene's walls I saw a maid,  
Scylla her name, and straight enamoured fell.  
My promises and prayers I blush to tell,  
My flatteries, and how she spurned them all  
And forced me thus on your strong might to call.  
Give me a charm that shall her rigour bend  
Or else some herb of magic potency lend,  
Not one to drive this passion from my heart  
But which shall force her too to bear her part.'

Then Circé answer made :—‘ ’Twere better far  
To court some maid whose eager passions are  
As burning as your own and whose love’s fire  
Flames with an equal fervour of desire.  
You should be wooed, not wooer, and I know  
You will be wooed, if you some hope allow.

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES".*

Have faith in your own beauty. I confess  
I, the sun's child, myself a god no less,  
In spite of all my powers with herb and song  
Ask now no more than that I should belong  
To you. Scorn her who scorns, your lover love ;  
And so to both alike a just judge prove.'

But Glaucus to her words of love replied :  
' Sooner shall foliage grow beneath the tide  
And seaweed on the lofty mountain side  
Then I forget my Scylla : while she's here,  
No other heart than her's can I hold dear.'  
He spoke, and Circē with fierce rage was fired.  
But since she could not hurt him,—nor desired  
For still she loved him—on the girl she turned  
The wrath wherewith her jealous hatred burned.

Uncanny herbs of magic strength she flung  
Well-pounded in a pot and o'er them sung  
A hellish charm ; then donned her bright array  
And from her palace hastened on her way,  
Leaving the fawning beasts, to Rheygium's shore  
That faces Zanclē's rocks. The waves upbore

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Her feet as on the rushing tide she trod  
And o'er the watery ways she went dry shod.

There was a pool, with banks in crescent round,  
Where Scylla oftentimes rest and shelter found  
From the hot sky and sea, when in the height  
The sun stood burning and with his fierce light  
Drove every shade away. There Circe went  
And its cool waves with magic poisons blent,  
Scattering the baleful juices she had brewed  
From deadly herbs in her dark solitude,  
And then in wrath to bring the maiden harm  
She muttered three times o'er a ninefold charm.

So when fair Scylla to the water came  
And waded in the stream, foul things of shame  
Loud-barking fastened on her milk-white waist,  
Which she, not knowing they were round her  
placed,  
Sought to escape, or from the water fling ;  
But they from whom she flees still to her cling ;  
And gazing on her legs with startled eyes  
She feels fierce dogs' heads there instead of thighs.

*Metam., XIV, 8-67.*

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

### POMONA AND VERTUMNUS

*The old Roman gods do not lend themselves very readily to poetical treatment. Janus, Flora, Ceres and the rest, are work-a-day divinities, each with his allotted task, as severely practical as were the people who worshipped them. But Ovid does his best, and in the story of Pomona and Vertumnus produces at least a charming fantasy.*

WHEN Procas in old Rome held sway  
    Of all the nymphs in his broad land  
Pomona was most skilled, men say,  
    The growth of fruit to understand.  
For woods and streams she had no care  
    But only for her garden fair.

Hence was her name. No spear she bore,  
    No javelin ; but a pruning hook  
With curvèd blade she ever wore,  
    Whose aid to curb the trees she took,  
Or set a graft within and so  
    In old boughs make new juices flow.

## *THE MIRROR, OF VENUS*

Nor did she leave them parched and dry,  
    But to the roots of every tree  
A trickling stream she would supply,  
    Making her work her joy to be.  
No thought had she of love, but pent  
Within her orchard lived content.

The leaping Satyrs oft essayed  
    To win her, and Silvanus too.  
Oft the young Fauns their heads arrayed  
    With wreaths of pine-cones came to woo,  
And he who does in gardens stand  
    With sickle armed and phallus wand.

But most of all Vertumnus burned  
    With passion never satisfied.  
Into full many a shape he turned  
    That he might reach the maiden's side,  
And gazed upon her with fond eyes  
    In this one or in that disguise.

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

Now as a reaper he would come,  
His basket full of ripened ears ;  
Now as a mower faring home  
With temples hay-wreathed he appears.  
And now a drover he would seem  
Fresh from the stabling of his team.

Sometimes as a fruit-picker he  
Would mount the trees on ladder high :  
Sometimes a pruner feign to be  
Or a leaf-gatherer's visage try.  
A gallant soldier he would look,  
A fisherman with rod and hook.

At last one day disguised he came,  
Grey-haired, with coloured snood, and stick,  
Seeming a bent and wrinkled dame,  
And begged the nymph her fruit to pick :—  
“ Your trees ”, he said, “ most lovely are  
“ But you are lovelier by far.”

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Then, gazing at the comely maid  
He kissed her thrice with warmer lips  
Than suited with the part he played,  
And on the grass beside her slips.  
And as he praised the rosy fruit  
Determined now to press his suit.

An elm-tree stood before them there  
Within whose branches did entwine  
With purple grapes most wondrous fair  
The clusters of a spreading vine,—  
“ Were yonder tree unwed,” he cried,  
“ ’Twould be but leaves and naught beside.

“ And so the vine which now at rest  
Lies sheltered on her husband’s arm,  
If she upon the ground were pressed  
Would in the dust lose all her charm.  
Why not therefrom example take  
And for yourself a marriage make ?

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES"*

" Ah, if you only would be kind !  
A thousand suitors even now  
Desire in you their bride to find  
Would you to their entreaties bow.  
No god in all this Alban land  
But burns and longs to claim your hand.

" Shun not these joys, lest late you grieve.  
Be wise and listen to my word :  
I love you more than you believe ;  
Take young Vertumnus for your lord.  
That is a match you ne'er will rue ;  
He will be husband staunch and true.

" He does not roam about the streets  
Nor does he, like your other swains,  
Court every maiden that he meets,  
He constant to his home remains.  
To none is he more known than me  
And for him I give guarantee.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

“ You are his first and only love,  
To you he will devote his days,  
His manly vigour he will prove,  
The native charm of all his ways.  
He can assume what shape he will  
And all you ask he will fulfil.

“ The same delights both of you please  
You can each other’s pleasures share.  
He ever is the first to seize  
The fruit that is your chiefest care.  
And oftentimes comes a-plundering  
The gifts that from your bounty spring.

“ But nothing now does he require  
Of the sweet herbs your gardens own,  
Nor has he of your fruit desire ;  
He longs for you and you alone.  
Take pity : think that he is near  
And that these are his words you hear.

*STORIES FROM “METAMORPHOSES”*

“ Beware too lest your ways offend  
The angry gods, and Nemesis  
Upon you retribution send ;  
For Venus hates such pride as this.  
There is a tale—I know it well—  
Listen : and I that tale will tell.”

*(Then follows the story of Iphis and Anaxaretē, given overleaf; which proving ineffectual, the god returns to his own shape, and Pomona, enchanted by his manly beauty, consents to his love.)*

Vertumnus spoke : yet spoke in vain ;  
And straight put off his woman’s guise  
And as a youth appeared again.  
Bright as the sun when in the skies  
His light has put the clouds to rout  
And in full radiance he shines out.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

The god was ready force to use :  
    No force he needed with those charms.  
Pomona, when his form she views,  
    Falls of herself into his arms,  
And smitten with an equal fire  
    Answers his love with her desire.

*Metam.*, XIV, 623-771.

## THE CRUEL MISTRESS

*The tale of cruel Anaxarete, the girl with the heart of stone, and of her luckless lover's death is pure romance, and belongs to the same family as many of the mediaeval love stories. Ovid tries, not very happily, to connect it with the temple of 'The Peeping Venus' in Cyprus, but really it is of universal application.*

A HUMBLE swain once loved a proud princess  
Nor dared at first his passion to confess.  
But when no reasoning could his pain abate  
He came as suppliant to the lady's gate,

*STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES".*

And to her nurse revealed his hopeless love,  
And then the other servants sought to move  
With soft entreaties. Letters he would write  
And beg that they be brought within her sight  
Or else hang tear-wet garlands on her door  
And lie stretched low upon the unyielding floor.  
But she more cold than stone, more hard than  
steel,  
Than waves more fierce, would no compassion  
feel—  
And mocked his love with bitter words of scorn  
Leaving him in despair, of hope forlorn.

At last the youth no more his pain could bear  
And coming cried aloud for her to hear :—  
‘ You are the victor : ne’er again shall I  
Annoy you now ’—and threw a rope on high  
Over the door-posts which he oft had wreathed,  
And ere he died this last sad utterance breathed.  
‘ Perchance, O cruel, this poor offering  
Of all I have will pleasure to you bring.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

Now, now at least, your favour you will show  
And to this deed some gratitude allow.  
I thought of you alone' So did he cry  
In the last moment of his agony :  
Then in the fatal noose he thrust his head  
And with his face towards her hung there dead.

The servants bore the body to his home  
And when the day of burial was come  
His hapless mother led the funeral  
With wailings through the city. Therewithal  
The princess heard and to her window went  
To learn the meaning of that loud lament.  
But scarcely had she seen him as he lay  
Stretched on the funeral pallet when straightway  
Her eyes grew stiff and all the blood ran cold  
Within her pulsing veins. A magic hold  
Constrained her by the window to remain :  
She tried to turn her eyes, but tried in vain,  
And all her body changed to that hard stone  
Which till that hour had held her heart alone.

*Metam.*, XIV, 699-757.

## *STORIES FROM "METAMORPHOSES".*

### THE POWER OF TIME

*The narrative of the Metamorphoses in its later stages becomes more serious and less entertaining. Books Twelve, Thirteen and Fourteen deal chiefly with the Trojan War and the early history of Italy, subjects which Virgil had already treated, and Ovid moves rather uneasily under the shadow of his great predecessor. In the last book of all, he introduces Pythagoras and from the philosopher's long discourse the following is a brief extract.*

FROM the great law of change we are not free  
And what we seem to-night we shall not be  
Upon to-morrow's dawn. There was a day  
When in our mother's sheltering womb we lay  
Mere seeds and hopes of man. Then nature  
wrought  
With cupping hands and to the sunlight brought  
The body pent within the maternal frame  
And as a feeble babe to life we came.

## *THE MIRROR OF VENUS*

At first upon all fours like beasts we went  
And when we tried to walk for guidance leant  
On some support and then with trembling knees  
Began to toddle in our nurseries.  
But soon we were more swift, to manhood  
grown,  
And all too quick the middle years had flown  
Ere feeble now and with declining strength  
Down the 'hillside we came to age at length.  
Time saps our vital force. Milo grown old  
Can scarce endure his muscles to behold  
That once with Hercules might well compare  
And now hang loose and flabby, soft as air.  
And so with Helen beauty swift must pass :  
She sees the wrinkles in her looking-glass,  
And knows that she is old, and sadly cries :—  
‘Behold the face that Love twice took for  
prize.’  
O envious Age, O great devourer Time,  
That mortals perish surely is your crime.  
With your sharp tooth you gnaw all things away  
And lingering bring them down in slow decay.

*Metam., XV, 214-236.*

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